

PROGRESS AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

EDGAR W. KNIGHT

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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TORONTO

PROGRESS
AND EDUCATIONAL
PERSPECTIVE

By

EDGAR W. KNIGHT

*Kenan Professor of Education,
The University of North Carolina*

NEW YORK
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1942

11/6/42 15:51 1.30

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Published February, 1942.



Printed in the United States of America.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

It is appropriate that the fourteenth volume of the Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series should be concerned with *Progress and Educational Perspective*, for America is now engaged in a war to defend and establish throughout the world what many believe is a momentous achievement of progress, namely political and social freedom based on faith in the high worth of the individual. That the fortunes of common man today are in many respects happier than they were even in the more recent past has become in America almost a truism. Throughout the world, however, his common lot has improved but little; in our own "land of the free," economic and social exploitation stains our democratic idealism and seemingly debases into cant the declaration that "all men are born free and equal." To what degree has man progressed toward universal brotherhood and rational control

of individual and national conduct? It is this widely used attribute of modern life, Progress, that Dr. Knight examines and challenges in this essay. He writes as an educational historian and as a clear-eyed observer of the social scene. He brings to the reader detailed references to assumptions and customs that illustrate his charge that modern progress is generally confused with change and that materialism has submerged values that alone can make man free. He does not hesitate to place his critical finger upon educational practices that imitate materialism at its worst. Educators, he tells the reader, are frantic in their efforts to be up to date, to adopt "the mode of fashion," and to advance the physical externals of education at the expense of, or to the neglect of, the ethical and the spiritual outcomes of learning. There is more than a hint in this essay that its author believes the American schools are decadent and are victims of the American disease "gigantism." He questions the role of science in educational theory and practice as concerned with educational objectives, pointing his criticism with references to the kind of analysis that makes confusion worse confounded

in curriculum making. "More than fifteen hundred social aims of English, more than three hundred aims of arithmetic in the first six grades, and more than eight hundred generalized aims of the social studies have been listed here and there in courses of study and in special studies." No doubt many summer-school directors will not like "nowadays the most monohippic summer session must have at least one 'work-shop' or be frowned upon as old-fashioned and therefore without educational vitality and 'umph'."

Dr. Knight writes with a sledge hammer upon an anvil. "The obvious fact of change in the world has in recent years been asserted with such pedagogical pontificality as to give it the glamour of fresh discovery." He declares, "In times of emergency, economic or military, it is not the function of sound education to change its aims. Its task is to do better what it is expected to do anyway, to serve as a stabilizing influence, to emphasize more strongly permanent values in human life." This statement will, of course, be challenged by modernists and they will demand that Dr. Knight name the permanent values he would emphasize. But there will be many others

to nod approval when they read that “educational theory in the United States today . . . is hospitable to every wind of pedagogical doctrine, tends to be formless and planless, to trust to faith or hope or charity or luck for ‘outcomes’ and ‘end products’, and seems allergic to constants in human life.” Whether one agrees with Dr. Knight or not, one will be enlivened by the vigor and pace of his style and stirred by his biting criticism of quantity and numerical criteria of educational progress. “Real educational progress must be measured in brains rather than bricks.”

Within the brief compass of this little essay it is obviously impossible to offer a comprehensive survey of the meaning of progress and the achievements that may be offered as illustrations of a particular definition thereof. But the essay, brief as it is, presents an array of references and facts that should be noted in an appraisal of modern civilization. Science has liberated but science has also become a means of new enslavement. Without science the present war would not have begun and without science it could not have world scope. There is danger in regarding change

as synonymous with improvement or progress and there is no less danger in accepting materialistic criteria of progress as measures of educational achievement. This is the theme of the essay. But reactionism is not its spirit. A broad historical, cultural base is advocated, tersely and forcefully declared in "We must refuse to be driven backward by the dead words of living men. Rather, we need to become more willing than we now are to be led forward by the living words of the dead."

Alfred L. Hall-Quest
Editor, Kappa Delta Pi
Publications

PREFACE

This little volume was prepared as the basis of the fourteenth lecture in the Kappa Delta Pi Lecture Series, for February 24, 1942. Limitations of space have at least in part made it difficult to treat *Progress and Educational Perspective* as adequately as that subject may deserve. But an attempt has been made to note how the “dynamic idea” of progress has gradually gained strength during the past two centuries; how especially during the past century that idea became closely identified with and colored by materialism; how change has come to be the euphemistic name for progress, even in education; and how the achievements of science and its imperial instrument, technology, have encouraged materialism to invade and to color the philosophy (or philosophies) and practices of American education, to put idealism to rout, and to entice or coerce education to proclaim promises

which our manifold arrangements for schooling have found it difficult to fulfill.

The educational historian of the future will doubtless record the beneficence that science and the scientific method have bestowed on the arrangements and facilities for schooling. But he may have to record the baneful effects of science and of the scientific method, when blindly applied to the "realm of mind and morals." He may even have to note sad if not indeed tragic efforts of the so-called educational scientists who have pretended with such high confidence to apply in that realm the exact techniques of the laboratories of mathematics, physics, chemistry, geology, and celestial mechanics. For apparently these efforts have brought much confusion to schooling—more perhaps than has afflicted it since the idea of American education began its steady conquest of this country, now at least a full century ago.

The idea of progress and modern man's almost blind faith in it have received heavy jolts during the past three decades. These jolts are familiar to all of us, particularly the jolt of the First World War; of the depression that set

in a dozen years ago and dislocated the spirits as well as the economy of millions of human beings; of the brutal and bloody spectacle of the past few years; and of the perfidy and treachery of tyrants during the past few months in a world gone mad and giving itself up almost completely to destruction. These jolts may be warnings to those who have blandly if not indeed rashly placed their full faith in the omnipotence of mere schooling or in the reckless use or abuse of what we have come to call "the scientific method" in education.

If we lack proper educational perspective the condition may be due in part to a tendency in this country to ascribe almighty power to schooling. The lack may be due also to our tendency in education to make a cult of almost everything except constants and simple truths which were old before the days of Socrates. Just as we have deified science and machinery in life outside the school so also have we tended to deify pedagogical science and pedagogical machinery inside the school, even while we know that some of the things which have meant most to the human race are not subject to laboratory proof

and cannot be mechanized. Much of our confusion in the aims of education may be accounted for by this tendency. Here, it appears, is the explanation of the moral and spiritual depression which seems to have been gaining in American education. If we are to recapture some of the idealism that characterized the work of education in the past, it may be necessary to turn to the strongholds, even as prisoners of hope. We must learn and follow the advice given by the Greek poet Hesiod more than 2500 years ago: "Before the gates of excellence the high Gods have placed sweat. Long and rough is the road thereto."

We may have to consider the wisdom of dis-encumbering ourselves of superfluous pedagogical luggage, which impedes real educational progress, and indulge ourselves less in vapid pedagogical vanities. We may have to renounce the cult of freedom, which often tends to mean license, indifference, easy optimism, and the growing vogue of toleration for almost any and every thing in modern pedagogy which, while reflecting a feverish eagerness to have education in the mode of fashion, tends to add to confusion

and frustration and the lack of proper educational perspective. Transitory pedagogical opinion may have to be reduced to a less important rôle in our life if education is to be made more than an ornament in prosperity or a refuge in adversity.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

January 2, 1942.

Edgar W. Knight.

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PROGRESS AND
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PROGRESS AND EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

I

“THE MOST DYNAMIC SOCIAL IDEA”

Would you realize what Revolution is, call it Progress;
and would you realize what Progress is, call it Tomorrow.

—VICTOR HUGO (1802-1885).

These words were written in *Les Miserables* in 1862. In the same work the eminent French poet and novelist also wrote: “Take away *time is money*, and what is left of England? Take away *Cotton is King*, and what is left of America?” And about a decade later Samuel Butler, well-known English author of *Erewhon* and *The Way of All Flesh*, wrote in “Lord, What is Man?” that “All progress is based upon the universal innate desire on the part of every organism to live beyond its income.”

The idea of progress has been called the “most dynamic social theory ever shaped in the history of thought.” Included in it is the idea of

I

“the continual improvement in the lot of mankind on this earth by the attainment of knowledge and the subjugation of the material world to the requirements of human welfare.”¹

Apparently this idea was unknown to the Greeks and the Romans. Plato and Aristotle, who dreamed of ideal societies in which the well-to-do could have “the good life,” seemingly did not dream of a theory of social development that would include all classes of people. The concept of progress was not hospitable to the doctrines of the early Christians, or the medieval theologians and scholastics, whose ideas of man’s depravity in this world and whose hopes of everlasting life in another world left little place for ideas concerning the terrestrial fortunes of man, for the material and social improvement of human beings hereabouts.

The old Christian view promised as compensation for the frustrations, sufferings, and tribulations here the hope of eternal life hereafter. This was an optimistic and comforting view of the destiny of man during the decline of pros-

¹ See Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (Macmillan, 1927), pp. 443-44.

perity and the increase of oppression and affliction in the Roman Empire, in which Christianity was born, and served to make life tolerable in the chaotic Middle Ages and even far into the eighteenth century. Christian thought and philosophy inured men to the hope of heaven after they had passed through this vale of human tears. This view was expressed by Sir Walter Raleigh, English navigator, explorer, statesman, and courtier, in a poem written the night before his execution in 1618:

Even such is time, that takes in trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with age and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days.
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust!

But as respect and concern increased for the business of living in this world, a foundation for the idea of progress was laid. The spirit of the Renaissance, the invention of printing, the beginnings and the growth of experimental science, the slow but gradual growth of democracy,

of freedom of publication and of speech, and other forces served mightily to advance the hopeful idea of progress, as J. B. Bury has shown so well in his superb story, which inquires “into its growth and origin.”²

This idea, which seems to have been first stated by the French philosopher, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, in his *Observations on the Continuous Progress of Universal Reason* in 1737, is, therefore, only a little more than two hundred years old. Says Bury:

Here we have for the first time, expressed in definite terms, the vista of an immensely long progressive life in front of humanity. Civilization is only in its infancy. Bacon, like Pascal, had conceived it to be in its old age. Fontenelle and Perrault seem to have regarded it as in its virility; they set no term to its duration, but they did not dwell on future prospects. The Abbé was the first to fix his eyes on the remote destinies of the race and name immense periods of time . . .

Although Saint-Pierre may have been the first man to give formal statement to the idea

² J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (London and New York, 1920). An American edition of this famous work was published by The Macmillan Company in 1932, with a brilliant introduction by Charles A. Beard.

that the progress of mankind was in its own hands, the idea itself was hinted at before his time. It has been claimed that the Franciscan friar, Roger Bacon, who died before the end of the thirteenth century, stated the idea of progress. But authorities answer that the claim was based on certain passages from Bacon's writings, taken out of their proper setting and "indulgently interpreted in the light of later theories." Pierre Dubois, French publicist, who died in the early part of the fourteenth century, proposed a program of social reform including international arbitration, the reduction of litigation, and forms of practical education. Another "reforming crank," Marsilius of Padua, Italian political theorist, wrote in 1324, *Defensor Pacis*, which has been described as one of the greatest and most original political and religious treatises of the Middle Ages. In it was expressed some confidence in democracy and the belief that the world could rid itself of the social insanity of war.

These and other men showed a tendency to rebel against ancient authority or to help prepare the way for outright rebellion against it. Sir

Thomas More, English author and statesman, published about 1515 a famous little book called *Utopia* ("Nowhere"), which has become synonymous with idealistic and visionary schemes for making this a better world. Francis Bacon, who had been anticipated by Roger Bacon, sounded a modern note in foreshadowing the method of experimental science. He pictured an ideal society organized around the achievements of science, the laboratory rather than the cathedral. To him the legitimate purpose of knowledge was utility, the betterment of human life; the promotion of the "happiness of mankind" through the advancement of learning. He believed that the real purpose of the sciences was the "endowment of human life with new inventions and riches." Bacon believed that knowledge progressed. But the criticism has been made that even his view of the social importance of science, as given in his *Utopian New Atlantis* (first published in 1627), contained a fallacy: the tendency to estimate the extent of human progress and happiness upon the extent to which material things, new inventions and riches, were increased and extended.

Slowly grew the tendency to supplement the

Christian theory of a blissful existence after death with the hopeful prospect of indefinite amelioration of the conditions of life and living in this world. This change was to be produced by the use of human reason in the control of material and later of social conditions that influenced the lives of human beings—for better or for worse. The idea of progress and of human perfectibility was promoted prior to 1860 by some of the facts and forces of history noted above. The implications of this doctrine had come to be fairly well established by the end of the eighteenth century; but the nineteenth century saw this dynamic idea gain its greatest strength and widest approval.

The idea of progress which Saint-Pierre stated had had tremendous effect upon the philosophers and thinkers of France, influenced the French Encyclopedists, had become known in Germany and England and, gradually, throughout the Western world, and in time had come to be one of the most important foundations of modern education. The idea was advanced by the French Revolution and by the struggle for independence in the American Colonies. It had been def-

initely reflected in Thomas Jefferson's statement of the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." It had also received support in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, which appeared in 1776, and showed the British economist's high confidence in "Those principles of the human constitution, which, whenever they are allowed free scope, not only conduct mankind to happiness, but lay the foundation of a progressive improvement in their distinction and character." Here was expressed belief in the indefinite perfectibility of man and his institutions and in his ability to "determine the lines of progress." Moreover, if science had the capacity for continuous improvement, would not men become capable "of perpetually advancing in practical wisdom and justice?"

The idea of progress had had a distinguished advocate in the French mathematician and philosopher Condorcet, who is also well known because of his plan for a system of state education for France, which he presented to the Assembly in 1792. The central thesis of Condorcet's best-known work, *Outline of an Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, is that of

continued progress and the infinite perfectibility of mankind. Man, he said, after reviewing his past, would ultimately remove all inequalities of opportunity and perfect human nature. August Comte, another French philosopher, who lived beyond the middle of the nineteenth century, was a conspicuous advocate of the concept of human progress, and ventured upon the dogmatic prediction that wars would cease, only to live to see this prophecy fail. And if he had lived sixty years longer he would have seen its further failure: by Civil War in the United States, by the Franco-Prussian War, by the Spanish-American War, by the Russo-Japanese War, and the almost universal collapse of the western world in 1914.

Herbert Spencer, the distinguished English philosopher of the nineteenth century, optimistically argued that progress was necessary, not incidental, that perfectibility was possible, and that evil was "not a permanent necessity" and tended to disappear: "always towards perfection is the mighty movement—towards a complete development and a more unmixed good." And of the purpose of education in this "mighty

movement" he said: "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of any educational course is to judge in what degree it discharges such function."

In the United States a century ago were many believers in the idea of progress. High in the list of these optimists was our leading educational statesman, Horace Mann, the subject of whose graduating oration at Brown University in 1819 was "The Gradual Advancement of the Human Species in Dignity and Happiness." The remainder of his life was spent in advancing that ideal. Thomas Henry Huxley, nineteenth century English scientist, did not, however, especially in his late years, hold out much hope for mankind. The "evolution of humanity as it is set forth in the annals of history" was to him the most saddening of all studies. "Man is a brute, only more intelligent than other brutes," he said; and he added that "even the best of modern civilizations appears to me to exhibit a condition of mankind which neither embodies any worthy ideal nor even possesses the merit of stability." To him, there was in the theory of

evolution no hope of the millennium. There may be some hope of betterment in the world, but without that hope Huxley would "welcome a kindly comet to sweep the whole affair away." He would have agreed with a cynic of recent years who gave it as his view that civilization seemed to be a disease fastened upon man in his effort to build a just and decent society out of very rotten material.

But the concept of progress seems to have gained momentum steadily during the past century, and even until recent years. This gain seemed to appear especially in science and its multitudes of practical applications and through the extension of democracy and democratic institutions, including public education. In recent years, however, the theory of progress has been questioned and uncertainties about the reality of progress have been expressed. The question has often been asked whether "change" has been confused with "progress." Does material progress, which seems real, mean substantial human progress in general? The term "cultural lag" has come to be widely used by sociologists and educationists. In his *The Decline of the West*,

the German philosopher Oswald Spengler rejoiced the hearts of numerous pessimists and social coroners. Other questions which have been asked of late include: "What are the best measures of human progress?" "What are the proper measures of the height of a civilization?" "Are the undenied evidences of our material achievements during the present century clear human gains?" "Have social insanities decreased in number and violence?" "Are the forces set against social insanities, such as war, more powerful than in the years behind us?" "Are technology, which is the imperial instrument of progress in the world today, and the material advances by means of technology the primary causes of war?" "Has the blind faith in the limitless resources of science and her majesty's laboratories led men confidently to defy fate?" "Is there any reasonable basis of confidence in man's attainment of a better and nobler future?"

The idea that education, an indispensable foundation of progress, was essential in the life of this country was expressed early by leaders here. American life and institutions had been influenced somewhat if not considerably, by

what is known as eighteenth-century liberalism, which was characterized by the ideas that human beings were inherently creative, that their creativeness could be directed to promote social progress in this world, that even the direction of that progress could be determined, and that the only valid *raison d'être* for social institutions was the continuous progress of human beings in this world.³

This idea passed slowly from a nebulous and optimistic theory or doctrine which heartened idealists, reformers, "uplifters," and even radicals and revolutionaries, but the idea was too vague to give much guidance to the masses. Kant, the German philosopher, had said that the world needed a Kepler or a Newton to discover and state laws for the march of civilization as these scientists had discovered and stated laws in physics. And he could have added that interpreters of such laws, when discovered and stated, were also needed, then as now.

By 1850, according to Bury, the idea of progress was "a familiar idea in Europe but was not

³ See Allen Oscar Hansen, *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* (Macmillan, 1926).

yet universally accepted as obviously true.” A Frenchman, M. A. Javary, writing at that time said that it was the characteristic idea of the age. “If there is any idea that belongs properly to one century, at least by the importance attached to it, and that, whether accepted or not, is familiar to all minds, it is the idea of Progress conceived as the general law of history and the future of humanity.” And he noted that some people were then intoxicated by the evidences of material progress and the applications of science; such people saw in these manifestations the limitless powers and hopes of man in this world. The idea or notion of social progress had been gaining somewhat in connection with the idea or “the notion of biological development, but this development still seemed a highly precarious speculation.” The belief in the “fixity of species and the creation of man” was highly protected and defended by powerful interests, chiefly theological, and while this ancient belief was now and then attacked it was not radically disturbed until later.

Then appeared Charles Darwin. His *Origin of Species* threatened to shear man of his glory

as "specially created to be lord of the earth" and make him face his "humble pedigree." Copernicus and Galileo in their revolutionary theory of celestial mechanics in the sixteenth century had had a hand in dethroning man from an exalted position in the universe, had altered his perspective in space, and had thrown man back somewhat on his own efforts. Darwin's work made man suffer "a new degradation within the compass of his own planet." This fresh degradation, according to Bury, was a decisive force in promoting the idea of progress in this world. By the 1870's and the 1880's belief in the idea of progress had widely gained, especially in this country, and had become the mental outlook and almost an article of faith of the educated classes.

But after the middle of the nineteenth century, after publication by Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, the idea of progress slowly came to acquire a materialistic color. Descriptions of utopias and beautiful isles of somewhere tended to give way to efforts to find the law or laws by which progress had been made in the past and by which it could be achieved in the future. With the work

of Karl Marx and Auguste Comte the idea that this world and the lives of men in it could be improved gained fresh vitality among the educated people even if the idea itself continued to be a bit vague to the masses.

But even the so-called "common man" could see the changes in conditions around him—the achievements of science, the increase in inventions, the rise of cities, better and quicker means of transportation and communication, advances in medicine, and other improvements. He did see these great changes and looked upon them as progress. If the world, by these measures, had become better than it had been, why could it not become better still? Perhaps it would be so whether or not. Perhaps progress was inevitable. Now that it had finally got a start, perhaps it was also irresistible.

In September, October, and November of 1931 the *American Mercury* published three articles under the title of "The Worst American State," by Charles Angoff and H. L. Mencken. Their purpose was to find out statistically the most advanced and the most retarded state. The factual evidence, drawn from official re-

ports, was set out on many items: on the tangible property per capita in the forty-eight states; on the percentage of the population that paid income taxes; on the amounts of bank resources and saving deposits; on the extent of farm tenancy; on the number of farms that used tractors and on the number of electrified farms; on the number of telephones and radios; on the per capita consumption of gasoline; on the number of life insurance policies held by the people in the various states; on postal receipts, and on income from corporations. There were statistics on the extent of illiteracy; on enrollments in schools; on the length of the terms of the public schools; on the value of educational property; on expenditures for schools and on salaries of teachers; on students in higher educational institutions; on volumes in libraries; on the circulation of newspapers and magazines; and on natives of the various states whose names appeared in *Who's Who in America* and in *American Men of Science*.

Angoff and Mencken likewise presented the death rates from malaria, tuberculosis, pellagra, typhoid fever, smallpox, alcoholism, homicides,

maternal deaths in child births; rates of infantile mortality; the supply of physicians and of dentists and the number of beds in hospitals; on the extent of lynchings; on the percentage of Negroes and of foreigners in the total population; on the percentage of Methodists and Baptists in the total church membership; on the percentage of prisoners in state and federal prisons; on suicides; on the ratio of marriages to divorces; on commitments for robberies; on the number of illicit distilleries destroyed; on the number of hotels; on the average temperature and rainfall; on railway mileage and on the mileage of improved state highways; on the per capita debt; and on other items designed to reveal the extent of the goodness or of the badness in each of the states.

In introducing these articles Angoff and Mencken were cautious in giving definitions of such words as "progress" and "civilization." These words they said were often disputed, but no one doubted that progress and civilization did exist. And they added:⁴

"... Holland is obviously a more progressive country

⁴ Used by permission of the authors and of the *American Mercury*.

than Portugal, and equally obviously France is more civilized than Albania. It is when concrete criteria are set up that dispute begins, for every man tries to measure the level of a given culture by his own yardstick, and so we have heard a musician argue that no country which lacks symphony orchestras can be called really civilized, and a banker maintain that wealth and civilization are indistinguishable, and not long ago a medical statistician was saying that 'the average length of life is the one and only sure index . . . of social progress.' But under all these differences there is still something resembling a general agreement, and back in 1928 it was well stated by Dr. A. J. Todd of Northwestern University at the Memphis Conference on Social Work:

'We shall have to agree that life on the whole is better than death, that health is better than sickness, that freedom is better than slavery, that control over fate is better than ignorance, that moderate provision for human need is better than chronic lack, that broad interests and moderate desires are better than narrowness and enforced asceticism—'

in other words, that a civilized society is one in which there is reasonable liberty and security, and opportunity to acquire knowledge, and no general or unendurable poverty, and no other avoidable impediments to happiness and well-being. The best of societies, of course, fall far short of the ideal, but they at least cherish it, and when fortune runs with them they usually move toward it. Thus 'a condition of general happiness,' in

J. B. Bury's phrase, is 'the issue of the earth's great business.' It may never be attained, but certainly one must admit that there is such a thing as striving for it, and that this striving results in changes that may be measured. When the percentage of illiteracy in a given area is reduced fifty per cent in a generation, we all agree—save maybe a few cantankerous iconoclasts—that progress has been made, and we likewise agree when the death-rate is reduced, when crime diminishes, when despotism gives way to free government, and when the arts and sciences are actively and effectively practiced. And most of us agree, too, when there is an increase in the per capita wealth. In itself, that increase may not be important, for a very rich country might still show a great deal of horrible poverty and suffering, but in practice we know that money tends to get itself distributed, and that when the average wealth increases the average well-being usually also increases."

Angoff and Mencken went on to point out how the criteria of progress have often been hotly debated and that there are wide differences of opinion in regard to such criteria. Urban people may look upon rural people as barbarians and the rural people sometimes "think of the city hordes as savages." Writings and discussions on the dispute still run both ways. Moreover, there are "sectional disdains and

derisions. Not many natives of New England would admit that Iowa is as civilized as Massachusetts and not many Southerners would admit that either the North or the West is as civilized as the South. Of late the Pacific Coast has come into the contest, and for a long while the Middle West has been advancing its claims. . . . But meanwhile, there are plenty of Americans who regard Kansas as almost barbaric, just as there are other Americans who shudder whenever they think of Arkansas, Ohio, Indiana, Oklahoma, Texas or California."

If Kansas is drier than New York, for example, that is proof of high civilization to most Kansans "but to *New Yorkers* it is only proof that the Kansans are jays." If the people in California burn more gasoline than the people in any other state, and if that state attracts more retired business men and over-societied women, produces more moving pictures, slaps in jail more labor agitators and supports more religious fanatics, then the people of California are proud of their state and of these achievements. But elsewhere these conditions may be scoffed at. "Nevertheless," said Angoff and Mencken,

“there remain certain criteria that are pretty generally accepted, even in areas where their applications are somewhat embarrassing. All Americans seem to be agreed that education is a good thing, and that the more of it there is, the better. All of them agree likewise that crime is a bad thing, and the less of it there is, the better. And all—or nearly all—agree that it is better to be rich than to be poor, and that any civilization which sees an increase in the general wealth is a civilization going up grade, not down.”

The past century has witnessed almost incredible achievements in science and its applications. When the *New York Times* celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 1931 it published a list of some of the most important inventions that had been made since 1851. It was an impressive list and revealed evidences of “progress.” In the same issue of that newspaper (September 13, 1931) appeared some “prophecies” by scientists and leaders in other fields of endeavor concerning achievements during the next eighty years. Dr. W. J. Mayo predicted that “the average lifetime of man may rise to the Biblical 70.” Sociologist William F. Ogburn, of

the University of Chicago, predicted that "the rapidity of social change will be greater than it is now." He agreed with Dr. Mayo that there would be more "old people in the world," but he said that the living conditions of the people would be greatly improved. Physicist Robert A. Millikan, of the California Institute of Technology, said that "biology rather than physics will bring the big changes." He also saw the scientific method increasingly employed in government. Physicist Arthur H. Compton, of the University of Chicago, said that the "whole of the earth will be one great neighborhood." He saw tremendous developments in communications. Michael I. Pupin, of Columbia University, eminent for his researches in electrical communications, predicted that "our civilization will create a new industrial democracy." This democracy, he said will give workers a fair share in accumulated wealth. Henry Ford said that "the promise of the future makes the present seem drab." He also saw "a better division of the profits to be found in life." Chemist Willis R. Whitney said that a "better world-wide education will serve our experiments." He saw self-

government as “the greatest task set for the men of our earth.”

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enthusiastic and may be a little perfunctory or impatient. Continuing Krutch said:

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As already noted, Francis Bacon defined the comparative values of the different kinds of knowledge by their utility in endowing human life "with new inventions and riches." In doing so he expressed a fallacy that has continued and its menace has become increasingly apparent in the United States and especially in American education. Now for many years the tendency has grown to look upon progress as largely quantitative and numerical, to associate change closely with progress, and to ascribe to larger facilities for schooling almost omnipotent influences, especially the power to advance the "happiness" of men by increasing their material riches. This view clashes somewhat with that expressed by Herbert Spencer. He viewed education as a firm foundation of progress but gave it as his belief that preparation for complete living was the purpose of education; and the intelligent way to test any part of education was by judging the degree to which it prepared for complete living. "How to live?—that is the essential question for us. Not how to live in the mere material sense only, but in the widest sense." Horace Mann, who died in the same year that Herbert Spencer

wrote "What Knowledge Is of Most Worth?" held that the aim of education was the improvement of human beings and their society. But even this idealist had heavily emphasized the high importance of schooling on the worldly fortunes of men, and since his time that emphasis has continued to be made.

Progress, peace, prosperity, and civilization have come to be considered almost synonymous. But each one of these words nowadays seems almost empty. The acquisition of the scientific attitude is among the greatest gains that the human race has made, and the achievements of science are the marvels of modern times. But we have heard highly applauded the marvels of science and especially its beneficent achievements without being made aware of the injuries and menaces of science. The scientific attitude is impersonal. Science is impersonal and may be used for good or for evil. But the scientific attitude is the possession of only a few people and these may not always be fully aware of the heavy social responsibilities of science. For example, it is doubtful if there has ever been a time in the history of the race, which is now almost entirely

what is known as eighteenth-century liberalism, which was characterized by the ideas that human beings were inherently creative, that their creativeness could be directed to promote social progress in this world, that even the direction of that progress could be determined, and that the only valid *raison d'être* for social institutions was the continuous progress of human beings in this world.³

This idea passed slowly from a nebulous and optimistic theory or doctrine which heartened idealists, reformers, "uplifters," and even radicals and revolutionaries, but the idea was too vague to give much guidance to the masses. Kant, the German philosopher, had said that the world needed a Kepler or a Newton to discover and state laws for the march of civilization as these scientists had discovered and stated laws in physics. And he could have added that interpreters of such laws, when discovered and stated, were also needed, then as now.

By 1850, according to Bury, the idea of progress was "a familiar idea in Europe but was not

³ See Allen Oscar Hansen, *Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century* (Macmillan, 1926).

yet universally accepted as obviously true.” A Frenchman, M. A. Javary, writing at that time said that it was the characteristic idea of the age. “If there is any idea that belongs properly to one century, at least by the importance attached to it, and that, whether accepted or not, is familiar to all minds, it is the idea of Progress conceived as the general law of history and the future of humanity.” And he noted that some people were then intoxicated by the evidences of material progress and the applications of science; such people saw in these manifestations the limitless powers and hopes of man in this world. The idea or notion of social progress had been gaining somewhat in connection with the idea or “the notion of biological development, but this development still seemed a highly precarious speculation.” The belief in the “fixity of species and the creation of man” was highly protected and defended by powerful interests, chiefly theological, and while this ancient belief was now and then attacked it was not radically disturbed until later.

Then appeared Charles Darwin. His *Origin of Species* threatened to shear man of his glory

as "specially created to be lord of the earth" and make him face his "humble pedigree." Copernicus and Galileo in their revolutionary theory of celestial mechanics in the sixteenth century had had a hand in dethroning man from an exalted position in the universe, had altered his perspective in space, and had thrown man back somewhat on his own efforts. Darwin's work made man suffer "a new degradation within the compass of his own planet." This fresh degradation, according to Bury, was a decisive force in promoting the idea of progress in this world. By the 1870's and the 1880's belief in the idea of progress had widely gained, especially in this country, and had become the mental outlook and almost an article of faith of the educated classes.

But after the middle of the nineteenth century, after publication by Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley, the idea of progress slowly came to acquire a materialistic color. Descriptions of utopias and beautiful isles of somewhere tended to give way to efforts to find the law or laws by which progress had been made in the past and by which it could be achieved in the future. With the work

of Karl Marx and Auguste Comte the idea that this world and the lives of men in it could be improved gained fresh vitality among the educated people even if the idea itself continued to be a bit vague to the masses.

But even the so-called "common man" could see the changes in conditions around him—the achievements of science, the increase in inventions, the rise of cities, better and quicker means of transportation and communication, advances in medicine, and other improvements. He did see these great changes and looked upon them as progress. If the world, by these measures, had become better than it had been, why could it not become better still? Perhaps it would be so whether or not. Perhaps progress was inevitable. Now that it had finally got a start, perhaps it was also irresistible.

In September, October, and November of 1931 the *American Mercury* published three articles under the title of "The Worst American State," by Charles Angoff and H. L. Mencken. Their purpose was to find out statistically the most advanced and the most retarded state. The factual evidence, drawn from official re-

ports, was set out on many items: on the tangible property per capita in the forty-eight states; on the percentage of the population that paid income taxes; on the amounts of bank resources and saving deposits; on the extent of farm tenancy; on the number of farms that used tractors and on the number of electrified farms; on the number of telephones and radios; on the per capita consumption of gasoline; on the number of life insurance policies held by the people in the various states; on postal receipts, and on income from corporations. There were statistics on the extent of illiteracy; on enrollments in schools; on the length of the terms of the public schools; on the value of educational property; on expenditures for schools and on salaries of teachers; on students in higher educational institutions; on volumes in libraries; on the circulation of newspapers and magazines; and on natives of the various states whose names appeared in *Who's Who in America* and in *American Men of Science*.

Angoff and Mencken likewise presented the death rates from malaria, tuberculosis, pellagra, typhoid fever, smallpox, alcoholism, homicides,

maternal deaths in child births; rates of infantile mortality; the supply of physicians and of dentists and the number of beds in hospitals; on the extent of lynchings; on the percentage of Negroes and of foreigners in the total population; on the percentage of Methodists and Baptists in the total church membership; on the percentage of prisoners in state and federal prisons; on suicides; on the ratio of marriages to divorces; on commitments for robberies; on the number of illicit distilleries destroyed; on the number of hotels; on the average temperature and rainfall; on railway mileage and on the mileage of improved state highways; on the per capita debt; and on other items designed to reveal the extent of the goodness or of the badness in each of the states.

In introducing these articles Angoff and Mencken were cautious in giving definitions of such words as "progress" and "civilization." These words they said were often disputed, but no one doubted that progress and civilization did exist. And they added:⁴

"... Holland is obviously a more progressive country

⁴ Used by permission of the authors and of the *American Mercury*.

than Portugal, and equally obviously France is more civilized than Albania. It is when concrete criteria are set up that dispute begins, for every man tries to measure the level of a given culture by his own yardstick, and so we have heard a musician argue that no country which lacks symphony orchestras can be called really civilized, and a banker maintain that wealth and civilization are indistinguishable, and not long ago a medical statistician was saying that 'the average length of life is the one and only sure index . . . of social progress.' But under all these differences there is still something resembling a general agreement, and back in 1928 it was well stated by Dr. A. J. Todd of Northwestern University at the Memphis Conference on Social Work:

'We shall have to agree that life on the whole is better than death, that health is better than sickness, that freedom is better than slavery, that control over fate is better than ignorance, that moderate provision for human need is better than chronic lack, that broad interests and moderate desires are better than narrowness and enforced asceticism—'

in other words, that a civilized society is one in which there is reasonable liberty and security, and opportunity to acquire knowledge, and no general or unendurable poverty, and no other avoidable impediments to happiness and well-being. The best of societies, of course, fall far short of the ideal, but they at least cherish it, and when fortune runs with them they usually move toward it. Thus 'a condition of general happiness,' in

J. B. Bury's phrase, is 'the issue of the earth's great business.' It may never be attained, but certainly one must admit that there is such a thing as striving for it, and that this striving results in changes that may be measured. When the percentage of illiteracy in a given area is reduced fifty per cent in a generation, we all agree—save maybe a few cantankerous iconoclasts—that progress has been made, and we likewise agree when the death-rate is reduced, when crime diminishes, when despotism gives way to free government, and when the arts and sciences are actively and effectively practiced. And most of us agree, too, when there is an increase in the per capita wealth. In itself, that increase may not be important, for a very rich country might still show a great deal of horrible poverty and suffering, but in practice we know that money tends to get itself distributed, and that when the average wealth increases the average well-being usually also increases."

Angoff and Mencken went on to point out how the criteria of progress have often been hotly debated and that there are wide differences of opinion in regard to such criteria. Urban people may look upon rural people as barbarians and the rural people sometimes "think of the city hordes as savages." Writings and discussions on the dispute still run both ways. Moreover, there are "sectional disdains and

derisions. Not many natives of New England would admit that Iowa is as civilized as Massachusetts and not many Southerners would admit that either the North or the West is as civilized as the South. Of late the Pacific Coast has come into the contest, and for a long while the Middle West has been advancing its claims. . . . But meanwhile, there are plenty of Americans who regard Kansas as almost barbaric, just as there are other Americans who shudder whenever they think of Arkansas, Ohio, Indiana, Oklahoma, Texas or California."

If Kansas is drier than New York, for example, that is proof of high civilization to most Kansans "but to *New Yorkers* it is only proof that the Kansans are jays." If the people in California burn more gasoline than the people in any other state, and if that state attracts more retired business men and over-societied women, produces more moving pictures, slaps in jail more labor agitators and supports more religious fanatics, then the people of California are proud of their state and of these achievements. But elsewhere these conditions may be scoffed at. "Nevertheless," said Angoff and Mencken,

“there remain certain criteria that are pretty generally accepted, even in areas where their applications are somewhat embarrassing. All Americans seem to be agreed that education is a good thing, and that the more of it there is, the better. All of them agree likewise that crime is a bad thing, and the less of it there is, the better. And all—or nearly all—agree that it is better to be rich than to be poor, and that any civilization which sees an increase in the general wealth is a civilization going up grade, not down.”

The past century has witnessed almost incredible achievements in science and its applications. When the *New York Times* celebrated its eightieth anniversary in 1931 it published a list of some of the most important inventions that had been made since 1851. It was an impressive list and revealed evidences of “progress.” In the same issue of that newspaper (September 13, 1931) appeared some “prophecies” by scientists and leaders in other fields of endeavor concerning achievements during the next eighty years. Dr. W. J. Mayo predicted that “the average lifetime of man may rise to the Biblical 70.” Sociologist William F. Ogburn, of

the University of Chicago, predicted that "the rapidity of social change will be greater than it is now." He agreed with Dr. Mayo that there would be more "old people in the world," but he said that the living conditions of the people would be greatly improved. Physicist Robert A. Millikan, of the California Institute of Technology, said that "biology rather than physics will bring the big changes." He also saw the scientific method increasingly employed in government. Physicist Arthur H. Compton, of the University of Chicago, said that the "whole of the earth will be one great neighborhood." He saw tremendous developments in communications. Michael I. Pupin, of Columbia University, eminent for his researches in electrical communications, predicted that "our civilization will create a new industrial democracy." This democracy, he said will give workers a fair share in accumulated wealth. Henry Ford said that "the promise of the future makes the present seem drab." He also saw "a better division of the profits to be found in life." Chemist Willis R. Whitney said that a "better world-wide education will serve our experiments." He saw self-

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of the universal school elsewhere in this country and in Europe were presenting arguments for education. According to their views, education could be made the sovereign solvent of all human troubles and make this world a prosperous and peaceful place for human beings to live in. It would not only make human beings wealthy and healthy and wise but it would serve to sustain them firmly through all temptations to dissipation, through the dazzling splendors of prosperity and the deep and dark gloom of poverty—if such an affliction should threaten to creep into their lives. It would increase production and remove those false ideas concerning the distribution of wealth which had come down from the distant centuries—atavistic echoes of grasping and wolfish greed from the primeval past. Education would not only reduce and prevent poverty and pauperism but would lessen crime. And it would strengthen and preserve and perpetuate the Christian and democratic institutions of this country. Education would wipe war from the face of the earth, brush away all human tears, and make the lion and the lamb lie down together and like it. Education would bring

peace on earth and good will to men. During the century that has passed since these arguments for education were so vigorous and current in the western world and especially in the United States, the universal school has been developed in our own country, and in many European, Far Eastern, and South American countries.

Seventy-five years after Mann had made his arguments for the value of education or schooling, or just twenty-five years ago, the United States Commissioner of Education in his letter of transmittal, to the Secretary of the Interior, of a document by A. Caswell Ellis that bore the title, "The Money Value of Education,"² wrote as follows:

All admit the value of the education of the schools for general culture and esthetic appreciation and as preparation for citizenship in a democracy, and most are willing to contribute out of the public funds to the support of the schools for these ends when they feel that the people are able to do so without too much sacrifice of what they call the necessities of life and too heavy a drain on their material prosperity. Comparatively few are aware of the close relation between edu-

² The University of Texas. Bulletin, 1917, No. 22; Washington, 1917.

cation and the production of wealth, and probably fewer still understand fully the extent to which the wealth and the wealth-producing power of any people depend upon the quantity and quality of education. The people themselves and their representatives in tax-levying bodies need to be shown that no other form of investment yields so large dividends in material wealth as do investments in popular education, and that comparative poverty is not to be pleaded as a reason for withholding the means of education, but rather as a reason for supplying them in larger proportion.

Here, as in 1842, an attempt was made to "point out in terms that the people can understand the definite ways in which education promotes industrial efficiency and increases material wealth." This was the avowed purpose of the study by Ellis in 1917 as it had been the purpose of Mann's report three-quarters of a century earlier. The study by Ellis said that the "phenomenal success of Germany" with its limited natural resources was due to "excellent public schools," while the backwardness of Russia, with a "vigorous and talented national stock and vastly better resources" was due to its poor educational facilities. The opinion of the president of the National City Bank of New York

was invoked. He was quoted as saying that Germany's leading rank among the great competitive industrial nations, with a "poverty of natural resources" and a people "not signally gifted with inventive ability or artistic temperament" was due to the German "schoolmaster. He is the great cornerstone of Germany's remarkable industrial success. From the economic point of view the school system of Germany stands unparalleled." This testimony was given only twenty-five years ago.

This fallacious bulletin of the United States Office of Education argued that the remarkable development of Japan and that country's demonstrated ability in "the highly technical and complicated art of modern warfare" and the educational deficiencies of his Russian troops led to the defeat of Kuropatkin. The document also stated that toward the turn of the century, according to a study reported in *World's Work* for April, 1901, the average citizens of Massachusetts were receiving seven years of schooling, those of the United States as a whole were receiving 4.4 years and those of Tennessee only three years. The result was that the average

citizen of Massachusetts daily produced eighty-four cents, that of the United States fifty-five cents, and the average citizen of Tennessee daily produced only thirty-eight cents, although the exact method by which these figures were arrived at was not made clear. About that time Massachusetts was expending on education \$38.55 per pupil and Tennessee was spending \$4.68 per pupil. The alleged effect of education upon the accumulation of wealth was also noted. The total wealth per capita in European countries "with efficient educational systems," was given as follows (in pounds): England, 302; France, 252; Germany, 156. The report of the total wealth per capita in countries "with inadequate educational systems" was given (also in pounds): Spain, 135; Greece, 101; Russia, 61.

The study by Ellis, widely publicized and avidly read throughout this country, listed in the bibliography 125 studies and articles in defense of "the money value of education" and concluded that "the superior earning power of graduates of schools is a demonstrated fact." The figures presented, he said, showed conclusively that the schools were "giving their pupils a greater

earning power than even the strongest advocates of education had claimed. Inevitably, as the economic processes become more complex, the relative need for directive force in industry becomes greater and greater. Experience has shown that only through a thorough system of public schools and colleges can a State or nation provide for itself an adequate supply of citizens capable of furnishing this necessary directive force."

The bulletin began, as had Mann's report in 1842, with high praise for education as a "broadening, deepening, and refining of human life." But such results of education, said the professor of the philosophy of education, could no more be measured in "dollars and cents than truth, self-sacrifice, and love can be made out of pork and potatoes. While the higher things of the soul are priceless rewards which true education brings, they are not its only result. The material and measurable rewards of education should be made plain to those whose votes must determine the support of our educational system."

When Henry Adams was teaching history at his alma mater in the 1870's he asked one of his students what he could do with the education

he was getting at Harvard. The eminent American scholar and historian was amazed at the reply of the young man: "The degree from Harvard College is worth money to me in Chicago."

In his *Was College Worth While?* which appeared a few years ago,³ Mr. John R. Tunis, who was graduated from Harvard in 1911, undertook to find out something about the 629 living members of his class. The members who responded to questions on their progress or lack of it, since Harvard decorated them on June 22 of that year, numbered 541. Tunis expressed astonishment at finding that "approximately one-eighth of this group of graduates of a supposedly rich university are, twenty-five years from college, living either off the Government or off their families." He was astonished also that some of them were unable to spell the name of the president of their university. And it was amazing to find that the average income of these men was under \$4,500 a year. Tunis said that a careful study of these 541 men disclosed that "*there is no such thing as security.*" Those who married rich girls invested their money unwisely or were

³ Harcourt, Brace, 1936.

foolish enough to permit their fathers-in-law to do so. Those who married jobs "found themselves unable to reach shore when hard times came and it was necessary to swim upstream." The poor boy of the class who worked his way through and was known to only a few of his classmates had become head of a big chain of metropolitan cigar stores. The boy who worked as night telephone operator in Newton, attended classes "and slept Heaven knows when," is today one of our few really distinguished scientists. Tunis concludes his study by saying that if their record tells the truth the chief ambitions of his classmates were "to vote the Republican ticket, to keep out of the bread line and to break 100 at golf. Envious ambitions? Yes, but does one need to go to college to have such aspirations?"

The passion for making money was early and late reported as a prominent characteristic of American life. About 1830, Mrs. Frances Trollope had quoted an Englishman as saying that in his long residence in the United States he had never heard Americans engage in conversation without mentioning money. In the same year that Mann was writing the report referred to ap-

peared a book that said that the inordinate love of material gain had led to many “perversions of things from their right and proper channels” and was working mischief and undermining the moral principles of the people. George W. Steevens, British journalist who traveled as far south as North Carolina and as far West as California, called his book on the United States, which appeared in 1897, “The Land of the Dollar”; and seven years later appeared another book on this country called “Dollars and Democracy.” In the streets, in restaurants, in street cars, wherever one went “the continual cry is always, ‘Dollars-dollars-dollars.’” Wealth swelled, dressed, gorged, and luxuriated, “emulated and unashamed.” The tendency to attach high importance to “materialistic effects” and the domination of life by business were accompanied by boastfulness and bragging, by bustling and hurrying, by nervousness, and by sensitiveness to criticism, said foreign observers of life in the United States. Voluble expression of emotion was also good form among a people of inexhaustible inventiveness and tireless energy. And tiresome platitudes were then accepted in religion and

politics as such platitudes were later to be accepted in education—as the latest and most profound revelations.

Kipling, here in the nineties, was shocked at the boastfulness and the preoccupation of the people with money. He was especially shocked by hearing an American describe the over-gilded and over-mirrored Palmer House in Chicago as “the finest hotel in the finest city on God Almighty’s earth” which the British writer saw crowded with people “talking about money and spitting about everywhere.” In a sermon in a gaudy church in that city Kipling heard the minister treat God “colloquially and exploited very much as a newspaper reporter would exploit a foreign potentate . . . With a voice of silver and with imagery borrowed from the auction room, he built up for his hearers a heaven on the lines of the Palmer House . . . and set in the centre of it a loud-voiced, argumentative, very shrewd creation that he called God.” Then, “apropos of some question of the Judgment,” the minister exclaimed: “No! I tell you God doesn’t do business that way.” Kipling said that the minister was giving the members of his congregation “a deity

whom they could comprehend, and a gold and jewelled heaven in which they could take a natural interest.”

Wrote one foreign visitor as he was leaving here no longer than two decades ago: “Good-bye to miles of advertisement imploring me in ten-foot letters to eat somebody’s codfish (‘No Bones!’) or smoke somebody’s cigarettes (‘They satisfy’), or sleep with innocence in the (‘Faultless Nightgown’)! Good-bye to long trains where one smokes in a lavatory, and sleeps at night upon a shelf screened with heavy green curtains and heated with stifling air, while over your head or under your back the baby yells, and the mother tosses moaning, until at last you reach your ‘stopping-off place,’ and a semi-Negro sweeps you down with a little broom, as in a supreme rite of worship! Good-bye to the house that is labelled ‘One Hundred Years Old,’ for the amazement of mortality! . . . I am going . . . to a land of vast and ancient trees, of houses time-honoured three centuries ago, of cathedrals that have been growing for a thousand years, and of village churches built while people believed in God. Good-bye, America! I am going home.” He

was leaving a land, he said, of "split infinitives and cross-bred words," where opinions were "reactions" and vamps were dangerous women, a land of grotesque exaggerations.⁴

Economic, political, and social changes generally come somewhat gradually and are not always impressive to those who have been living with and among them. And the process of such changes is generally unobtrusive. Even changes in education, as changes in manners, morals, food, style of clothes, inventions, discoveries, means of transportation, methods of warfare, are striking only when viewed in contrast with conditions in other periods.

The period in which the great American educational statesman was advancing one of the earliest and perhaps most vigorous arguments for the economic value of schooling was a feverish and fitful period, marked, as is the period in which we have been recently living in this country, by strange contradictions and inconsistencies. The seventeen million people of the United

⁴ From "Good-bye, America!" by Henry W. Nevinson. This article appeared in the London *Nation and Athenaeum*, was republished in book form by B. W. Huebsch, New York, 1922, and is used here by the kind permission of Mr. Huebsch.

States in “the fabulous forties” were living in the period of a “brilliant three-ring circus, filled with marvelous side shows and prodigious natural curiosities, glittering with mirrors and chandeliers, thunderous with brass bands and fireworks, choked with the dust of glorious caravans.”⁵

Politically, the period had descended from the revolts of Jacksonian democracy, which saw government pass gradually from the hands of the “aristocrats” into the hands of the “filthy democrats.” Political life, hitherto characterized by considerable formality and dignity, was becoming simpler and cruder and more intense. Political inequalities were being gradually lessened. The ballot, which in general had long been restricted to those who were privileged in property, had been gradually extended. All the states that had come into the Union after 1812, except Mississippi, had accepted manhood suffrage and the doctrine of majority rule instead of the ancient rule of property, although some of the older states continued to resist attempts to remove the qualifications of property for vot-

⁵ Meade Minnigerode, *The Fabulous Forties* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1924).

ing and for holding office. Eminent Americans, like Daniel Webster in Massachusetts and Chancellor James Kent of New York, had shown alarm at the wave of democracy that threatened to overrun their respective states in constitutional conventions in the early 1820's. Webster had stoutly argued that to give all men the right to vote would mean the surrender of "the wealth of individuals to the rapaciousness of a merciless gang"; and Chancellor Kent protested against the predicted dire results from manhood suffrage, which he likened unto a mighty engine that would destroy property, laws, and liberties. But the influence of the fresh and vigorous new states of the West in time reacted on the old states of the East and the ancient property and religious requirements for voting and for holding office were gradually abandoned. Opportunities now widened for the extension of public educational advantages to those classes who formerly had been deprived of them and by that extension strengthened an important foundation of progress.

Self-government, moreover, was now promising to become educative. The inalienable rights

of the masses seemed to promise to replace, as ideals in this new country, the inherited rights of the classes. Already, also, even if slowly, American private law had begun to be separated somewhat from English statute and precedent. And while the common law continued to be observed, the body of American statutes and decisions exhibited a strong tendency toward those forms of legislation which were soon to become recognized in part at least as native products of the legal system of the United States.

The new democracy which showed promise of flourishing had received significant encouragement and impetus in the election of Andrew Jackson to the presidency of the United States in 1828, as the popular leader of the democratic West. This "man of the soil," and the first president of the country, except Washington, who had not attended college, had supreme confidence in the virtue and the good sense of the common people and represented the best embodiment of their desires. He personified the democratic movement which under his leadership established itself more firmly in the life of the United States. The election of Jackson over Adams in 1828 has

been described as “a triumph of democratic principle,” the assertion of the right of the people to govern themselves. It was an unmistakable popular endorsement of a new social and political order.

Already the American mania for organization was appearing. There were societies to send missionaries to the heathen, to promote the sale and circulation of the Bible and religious tracts, to educate men for the Gospel ministry, to promote temperance and the observance of the Sabbath, to bring comfort to convicts, to ransom the black slaves, and to colonize the free Negro. Already the energies of Christian America were employed in efforts to remedy, to patch up, and to repair.

The democratic awakening was due in part also to the awakening of a class consciousness among the laboring classes in the industrial centers. These classes were products of the industrial revolution, the introduction of machinery, the rise of the factory system and the remarkable increase in the inventive genius of the American. The changed conditions touched the daily lives of men, women, and children. Thousands of them were drained off from the farms and were

suddenly transferred to new and strange grievances. New social problems were inevitable: problems of ignorance concentrated in congested communities; problems of pauperism, of delinquency and dependence; problems of vagrancy and crime now appeared to an alarming degree for the first time in American life. Neither science nor law had yet offered the workers protection from the destitution and disease, vermin and vice, insanitary and unhygienic conditions, that resulted from long and unregulated hours of labor. But the energetic advocates of education said schooling would remove these unhealthy conditions.

Indignant were the protests of the working men against the barbarism of imprisonment for debt—a practice which in theory applied equally to all but pressed most heavily on the poor and underprivileged. In the year that Andrew Jackson became president, the working men declared in a large meeting that “One principle that we contend for is the abolition of imprisonment for debt.” In that year there were 75,000 persons in debtors’ prisons in the United States, many for trifling sums, half of them for amounts less than \$20. A year later 3,000 persons were sent to

prison for debt in Massachusetts. In the city of Boston 1,400 victims were imprisoned, a hundred of them women, on charges of owing small amounts. Charitable organizations were formed to bring succor to persons in prison for debt, not to abolish the brutal practice nor pay the debts and secure the liberty of prisoners; but to furnish food, clothing, and fuel to prolong their agony.

Humanitarian movements slowly gained strength in the first and second quarters of the nineteenth century. The number of crimes for which the death penalty had been exacted was decreasing and the abolition of that penalty was actually advocated. There were movements to support the cause of world peace and to improve the position of women. Religion shared with Jacksonian Democracy the fervid eagerness to take light to dark places; and in the wide extension of missionary and humanitarian activities the rivalry of religious denominations became keen and highly competitive. It was a period of frequent apostolic religious revivals and camp meetings.

This competition of religious denominations was very keen in the field of higher education;

many of the early colleges were agencies of sectarian imperialism. After the decisions in the Dartmouth College case in 1819, the way was cleared for a feverish denominational effort to establish colleges to promote the interest of the various religious groups. Between 1820 and 1830 more than a score of colleges appeared, twice as many during each of the next two decades, and almost one hundred between 1850 and 1860. But the mortality rate of these institutions was gruesomely high. Denominational competition (no keener a century ago perhaps than now), internal religious and political dissensions, and other causes including natural disasters saw approximately eighty per cent of them die, notwithstanding the arguments for their support. The Society for the Promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West, organized in New York in 1843 and operated until 1869, brought forward the economic value of higher education as an argument for its support by eastern philanthropists. The western colleges, which Horace Mann said had conquered the Great West and, religiously speaking, had taken it away from Black Hawk and given it to

John Calvin, would aid "mercantile morality" and secure business investments. Eastern merchants were appealed to thus to promote and guarantee "the commercial integrity of this immense market for Eastern industry. . . Education and religion define and defend the path of trade." This missionary effort in higher education, it was claimed, would promote economic prosperity as well as check irreligious tendencies, rationalism, atheism, and prevent the growth of "hot beds of social and economic radicalism." While these institutions represented in part the increasing interest in economic well-being they were also towers of orthodoxy and stood unchallenged until they were later shaken by the assaults of science and the hypotheses of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer.

The period in which denominationalism was expressing its imperialistic ambitions through higher education also represents "the youth of capitalism" in the United States. Economic interests were fast growing and gaining in strength. Agriculture, the oldest and largest of the "industrial" enterprises, was giving way to manufacturing which was becoming "boastful of

achievement, lustful of power," and eager for influence in government. Textiles and iron occupied leading positions in industry. By 1830, this country had ranked second only to England in the manufacture of textiles and a decade later seventy-five per cent of all the cotton goods manufactured in the United States was produced in the New England States. The hot blast process and the use later of anthracite coal in smelting of iron revolutionized that industry.

The industrial revolution was greatly advanced also by transportation. The building of canals which had been a "craze" for several years had reached its greatest achievement up to that time in the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, an engineering feat that had tremendous effect on the economic, social, and political life of this country. It opened up in the East markets for the products of the West and took to the West vast numbers of immigrants from the East —material and human forces that changed the current of American history. Then came the railway which further accelerated the industrial revolution. Fierce competition increased the mad rush for wealth and the glorification of individ-

ual success. When Horace Mann was presenting the arguments for the economic value of education “the sweep of economic forces” was already becoming very powerful. The period of the forties and the fifties was changeful and creative and “the most spirited epoch between the founding of the colonies and the end of the nineteenth century.”⁶

Inventors and their inventions had begun to transform the life of the United States, to revolutionize industry, to make the vast natural resources of the country available to manufacturing, and greatly to promote the enterprise and reward with princely profits the effort of the captains of steam and steel. During the “fitful fifties” the value of manufactures practically doubled, while the output of Southern staples showed an increase of less than twenty-five per cent. When Abraham Lincoln became president of the United States, industry, railroads, commerce, and city properties exceeded in value “all the farms and plantations between the Atlantic and the Pacific—a fact announcing at last the triumph of industry over agriculture.”

⁶ Charles A. and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization* (Macmillan, 1927), Vol. I, p. 632.

The depression that began in 1837 checked industry only temporarily and the census of 1840 showed marked development in manufacturing industries. There was a tremendous outburst of energy in industrial activities, due in large part to the steadily increasing number of patented inventions, which had grown from about 300 in 1800 to nearly 6,000 fifty years later, and to more than 23,000 in 1860. In that year alone the number of patents, looked upon as an index of progress, was more than 4,800. Most of the inventions for which patents were issued were labor-saving machines, mechanical applications to processes of industry, and gadgets designed to simplify industrial processes and to reduce costs—utilitarian improvements which raised the standard of living among the people. There were the cotton gin, reaping machine, the sewing machine, the cylinder printing press, friction matches, illumination through petroleum, the steamboat, the locomotive, the telegraph, the submarine cable, the vulcanization of rubber; there were improved looms to produce figured fabrics; there were cooking stoves and air-heating stoves; there were rubber goods,

new kinds of boots and shoes, firearms, and musical instruments. There were advances in medical science, including the use of anesthetics. The telegraph, first practically used in 1844, the sewing machine invented two years later, and the rotary printing press in 1847 are accounted among the most important inventions of the nineteenth century. The British acknowledged the significance of the products of Yankee inventiveness and in 1841 a report to the House of Commons noted that most of the new inventions lately introduced into England had come from the United States. The applications of science were promoting progress and human betterment.

Of great social significance, also, was "the westward movement." A publication that appeared in Boston in the year that Horace Mann became secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, said that three classes, "like the waves of the ocean," rolled one after the other in the settlements to the West. There were the "pre-emption" pioneers who depended for the subsistence of their families on the natural growth of vegetation and hunting, log cabins,

“truck patches” and corn cribs. There were the emigrants who purchased lands, added field to field, built roads and bridges and houses with windows of glass, had brick or stove chimneys, perhaps planted orchards, built mills, court-houses, jail-houses, and school-houses and made other gestures toward the arts of civilized life. Then rolled on another wave: “The men of capital and enterprise come. The settler is ready to sell out and take advantage of the rise in property, push further into the interior and become himself a man of capital and enterprise in turn. The small village rises to a spacious town or city; substantial edifices of brick, extensive fields, orchards, gardens, colleges, and churches are seen.”⁷

The widespread optimism of the period inspired and led the American people to believe in the spirit of expansion, the sentiment of “manifest destiny”: it was the duty of the United States to extend the boundaries of the national domain to the Pacific and opposition to such extension and annexation would fly in the face of

⁷ E. L. Bogart, *The Economic History of the United States* (Longmans, Green, 1907), p. 174.

fate. And moved by this belief, which became fervid and compelling, this country added a million square miles of territory to its landed possessions between 1840 and 1850.

In 1836, that vigorous and intrepid Tennessean, General Sam Houston, had attacked and destroyed the advance division of the Mexican army at San Jacinto, captured its leader, Santa Ana, in effect established the independence of Texas, which had a large slave population, and increased for several years the hostility of the abolitionists who hated slavery in any form. But the opposition of the anti-slavery leaders did not long delay the annexation of Texas. Texan trade was important to manufacturers, merchants, the owners of ships, and other business interests, and there was the growing fear, real or imaginary, that England had designs on Texas and its immense resources—just as there is fear today that Hitler has designs on South America.

In May, 1846, Congress voted a declaration of War on Mexico, and a year later General Winfield Scott entered and captured Mexico City. Under the peace signed in February, 1848,

the Rio Grande was recognized as the southern boundary of the United States to which was surrendered all of the territory which included all of what are now the states of California, Nevada, and Utah, substantially all of New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of what are now Colorado and Wyoming.

In his first message to Congress in 1801, President Jefferson had noted with great satisfaction the increase in the population in this country from 3,929,000 in 1790 to 5,308,000 in 1800. And in that message he had said:

“We contemplate this rapid growth and the prospect it holds up to us, not with a view to the injuries it may enable us to do others in some future day, but to the settlement of the extensive country still remaining vacant within our limits, to the multiplication of men susceptible of happiness, educated in the love of order, habituated to self-government, and valuing its blessings above all price.”

By 1860, the people of this country had increased to more than thirty-one millions and the territory of the United States had grown to its territorial limits of today, the population meantime spreading westward to the Pacific Ocean.

Never in history had a nation grown so rapidly in population or spread so extensively in territory during a similar period of time. Meantime, attempts at political, social, economic, and territorial adjustments had brought to the front many national problems, including the issues of states' rights, internal improvements, the status of the territories, sectional suspicions and jealousies, "protectionism," and Negro slavery, which had gained the full attention in national politics and split the American nation wide open.

Notwithstanding economic dislocations and the depression of 1837 the foundations of great fortunes were being laid. "Horizons vanished in the Forties, the sun rose and set in adventurous waters, there were a new Heaven and a new earth, new portents in the skies, new stars on the Flag. It was the springtime of the year in American history, a restless sap flowed in the veins of her people, and they took up their beds and walked. And at the end of the rainbow stretching from coast to coast stood the fabulous pot of gold."⁸ The arguments of Horace Mann for

⁸ Minnigerode, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

the money value of schooling should have been congenial to the temper of the time and in a climate such as that of the eighteen-forties.

But, inconsistent seem the peculiarities of the period in which Mann did his work, when these are viewed against what seems to have been forthright and realistic action in material progress, in political behavior, and in arguments for humanitarian reforms. Among the peculiar traits which observers noted in this materialistic and "go-getting" time, were prudery or false modesty, unctuous and insincere piety, hypocrisy, pretense, artificiality of manners, and a strange sentimentalism which was manifested in a flood of excessively emotional, uncontrolled, and bombastic writings. Socially, politically, and ecclesiastically it was marked also by dogmatism and bigotry. The growing belief in the theory of progress slowly acquired almost an overtone of emotion, a faith that became almost religious in nature. This faith promised partially to serve as a substitute for the waning belief in "other-worldliness": faith in human progress instead of "celestial rewards of the separate soul," says Bury, who adds: "The hope of an ultimate

happy state on this planet to be enjoyed by future generations . . . has replaced, as a social power, the hope of felicity in another world."

¶ This same period, however, which was characterized by prodigious effort, tenacity, and perseverance, and faith in human progress, witnessed the rise of Joseph Smith and his followers, the Mormons, their migration from New York to the western states, their attempts to establish a "New Jerusalem" in Missouri, their frontier hardships, their dissensions, their difficulties with the laws, and finally "the enforced wintry exodus of the saints" from Illinois to Utah. It witnessed the appearance of the fanatical followers of William Miller under whose emotional stimulation preparation was made for the destruction of the world and the second coming of Christ, events which Miller had predicted by the most intricate calculations or prophecies from statements in the Bible. His prophecy had scheduled the day of doom for April 23, 1843. According to the books thousands of people crowded into feverish meetings to prepare for the end; men closed their business establishments and some murdered their

wives who refused to accept the word of Miller; mothers poisoned their children; men and women committed suicide or went insane under the hysteria of the time; shopkeepers advertised "muslin for ascension robes."

The beginning of the decade of the "fabulous forties" was characterized by one of the most remarkable presidential campaigns in the history of this country. It was a hornswoggery and clatter-whacking campaign, punctuated with the slogans of "Tippecanoe, and Tyler too," when scores of thousands of Americans became politically sentimental over log cabins and hard cider. It was a contagious campaign. Then in politics as frequently in education nowadays the people of this country took sick with slogans and little if anything else could matter. Cider was proclaimed as the national beverage, the log hut or the log cabin as the most supernal emblem of virtue and integrity, and Tippecanoe as the most hallowed name of all.

Then, as nowadays, life in the United States was featured by dual or mixed motives, with the "profit motive" strong. It was the time of the ballyhooing of Phineas Taylor Barnum, the

“Prince of Humbugs,” who showed very realistically that deception paid and that the American people, then as now, would pay to be deceived. It was the period of what was believed to be rough popular justice—the monstrosity known as “lynch law”—long before the days of the Ku Klux and the White League, drastic extra-legal methods which many parts of the United States experienced. Allan Nevins⁹ reports each of two observers who, coming to this country “at an interval of several years,” said that he saw a newspaper account of a lynching under the headline “Jerked to Jesus.” It was the time of controversy between Doctor Morton of Massachusetts and Doctor Crawford of Georgia over the discovery of anesthesia, of the hysterical attacks by the clergy on the desensitizing effects of ether, especially its use to assuage the pains of childbirth; the invoking of the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of Genesis to bring biblical support to their opposition—with scores and scores of sermons preached far and wide throughout the country to prove

⁹ *American Social History as Recorded by British Travellers* (Henry Holt, 1923).

that pain was divinely prescribed for motherhood because woman had led man astray with an apple. It was a period of prudery, of tight corsets, hoopskirts, and crinolines, leg o' mutton sleeves, scoop bonnets, of frail, wasp-waisted, fainting women, who had many duties but few rights, and of clinging vines forbidden to seek trellises for themselves. It was a time when, according to Mrs. Trollope, a man in Cincinnati who called himself a scholar and a man of reading assailed Lord Byron for his immorality and said that the title of Pope's "Rape of the Lock" outlawed the poem from the circle of any respectable family; when the polka drew protests from all over the country, including censure by the *Herald*, while the *Tribune* fulminated against the prize fight as a "shameful strife of gladiators." It was a time which lingered long when even idealists were not always blind to the main chance, as witness the diary of a poet of the Civil War period (Edmund Clarence Stedman):

"Nov. 8, 1864. Stood two hours in the rain and voted for Old Abe. Realized on stocks and made \$1375.

"Nov. 9. Yesterday a great triumph for the National

cause. Thank God! The future of America is now secure.

“Nov. 10. Fall in gold. I make on everything I manage for myself and lose on the operations of my agents.”

Materialism was also gaining in England. In the same year that Horace Mann was setting out arguments for the economic value of schooling, Alfred Tennyson published *Locksley Hall*, which has been pointed to in illustration of the fact that the idea of progress was beginning to creep into the imagination of the people in England. The central theme of the poem is progress, and contemporary interest in “the terrestrial destinies of humanity,” the excitement of living in a “wondrous Mother-age.” Here are set out dreams of the future and concern for the increasing purpose in history as the thoughts of men widened “with the process of the suns.” Bury says that this poem, whose novelty lay in finding a cure for a personal sorrow, “not in religion or in nature, but in the modern idea of progress,” marked a stage in the development of that dynamic idea.

In June, 1851, about a decade after Mann

had presented arguments for the material value of education, the Prince Consort was reveling in the apparent triumphs of material progress, as exhibited in the great Crystal Palace Exposition in London. This exhibition, like The Century of Progress in Chicago eighty-odd years later, publicly recognized and applauded loudly and in grand manner the progress of the period and the amazing growth of man's power over the natural and material world. The *Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal*, in an article in the October issue of 1851,¹⁰ said that the aim of the exhibition was "to seize the living scroll of human progress, inscribed with every successful conquest of man's intellect." While the exhibition was also hopefully viewed as evidence that the human family was finally moving happily toward a better condition, the emphasis was obviously on its material achievements. Also, it was applauded as a symbol of "the realization of the unity of mankind." Railway transportation, the telegraph and other inventions had greatly reduced distances which hitherto had

¹⁰ Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations," Vol. XCIV, pp. 285 ff.

separated the nations and various parts of the globe; and the exhibition had provided men with “a true test and a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived in this great task, and a new starting-point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions.” In a public speech at the Mansion House the Prince Consort, who “originated” the exhibition, voiced the same sentiment. The solidarity of the world was emphasized not only by that speech and in the press, but simultaneously with the opening of the exhibition the *Times* published William Makepeace Thackeray’s “May-Day Ode,” which celebrated the evidence of peace and good will among the people of the earth which the great show was believed also to exhibit:

“See the sumptuous banquet set,
The brotherhood of nations met
Around the feast.”

The same issue of the *Edinburgh Review* said: “As a nation, we cannot claim the distinction of having originated this great lever of industrial progress; but we have at least given

to the world the two philosophers, 'Bacon' and 'Newton,' who first lent direction and force to the stream of industrial science; we have been the first to give the widest possible base to the watch-tower of international progress, which seeks the promotion of the physical well-being of man, and the extinction of the meaner jealousies of commerce."

"The Century of Progress Exposition," which opened in Chicago in 1933, to celebrate the centennial of that city, has been described as a glorification and deification of "mechanistic science, machinery, advertising, selling, and promoting." Its keynote or central theme was the demonstration to an international as well as a national audience of "the nature and significance of scientific discoveries, the methods of achieving them, and the changes which their application has wrought in society." This underlying philosophy of the great exposition was derived in cooperation with an advisory committee of the National Research Council through three score committees and more than four hundred eminent specialists who represented the basic sciences. True, the Social Science Division of the

exposition had for its purpose the attempt to present for the first time “the great progress and development of the social sciences, of social research and its methods, and of their increasing application to the problems of human welfare.” This exposition and the enormous exhibition erected in New York for the celebration of 1939 both represented high salesmanship and advertising and the spirit of “fireworks” of the American people. According to a member of the American Institute of Architects, even the buildings of “The Century of Progress” betrayed a sense of “insecurity and doubt”—“symptoms, at heart, of exhaustion and despair,” especially for architects and for those who saw “positive aesthetics” and what Philipp Lenard called “progress in morals and true culture” as signs of the advance of civilization and the upward march of mankind.

Since 1851 we have not seen “the meaner jealousies of commerce” decrease in number or intensity but instead increase and become more intense through the “new inventions” of science which Bacon said would bring new riches and more happiness to men. Had not primary em-

phasis been placed on material matters, money, and trade, by other exhibitions: those in Paris in 1852, and 1867 and 1878 and 1889 and 1900? those in London in 1862 and 1886 and 1908 and at Wembley in 1924? in Vienna in 1873? in Philadelphia in 1876 and in 1926? in Sydney and Melbourne in 1879 and 1880 and 1888? in Chicago in 1893? in Buffalo and Glasgow in 1901? in St. Louis and Liége in 1904 and 1905 and in Brussels in 1910? How very different were these shows from their parent which strutted herself in Hyde Park, London, in 1851?

Between the report of Mann in 1842 and the statement by the United States Bureau of Education in 1917, the people of the United States witnessed many evidences of progress. The changes most conspicuous during that time appeared in the prodigious material development of the country, its swift industrial growth, the great increase in population and in wealth, advances in the means of transportation and communication, the building of immense private fortunes and the establishment of large and useful philanthropic foundations. These foundations, which represented almost a billion dollars in

private wealth, are largely the creation of the present century and are unmatched anywhere at any time in the whole history of the race.

It is estimated that there were at the outbreak of the Civil War only three or four millionaires in the United States; in less than four decades there were 3,800 millionaires. Their wealth had come from railroads, mines, factories and forests instead of agriculture. With the rise and growth of these great masters of wealth the power of the plutocracy spread widely and gathered immense strength and influence as it spread. But while this power was widening and strengthening the American people were witnessing also the development of human, political and social institutions undreamed of by their forefathers, almost incredible achievements of science, the multiplication of inventions, and the development of the machine tool and the increase in the power of the machine which altered their lives more than all the inventions made during the preceding two thousand years. So, at least, we are told.

They also witnessed great progress toward political democracy and an increase of faith in

the potential intelligence of the common man. They saw broad rights of persons and property established and prohibition against the deprivation of persons of their lives, their liberties and their property, without due process of law. They saw civil service and other reforms increase in many directions and hold out some hope for democracy. They witnessed the abolition of imprisonment for debt and of legalized human slavery, decline of belief in lynch law, the victory of adult suffrage, the shortening of hours and the improvement of conditions of labor, the emancipation of women and increase of their rights and the rights of children, the humanizing of penal and charitable institutions, reduction of illiteracy, and great increases in facilities for schooling. Government gradually intervened on behalf of the weak and the weak of will against the strong and willful. There appeared also a liberal tendency in the judicial interpretation of the law of the land.

Among the many remarkable achievements of the scientific revolution and its many applications to the needs and comfort of men, and especially during the past two or three decades, per-

haps the most conspicuous and hopeful of all have been in modern medicine and surgery. Significant are the applications of principles of sanitation and other efforts to salvage human life and to increase man's sense of security for his most precious possession—his health—and to arm him against disease and untimely death. Probably in no period in history have so many blessings been showered upon the human race. Many years have been added to the average life of man. We have discovered the causes of yellow fever, typhus fever, typhoid fever, bubonic plague, cholera and other afflictions of the human race which were probably almost as uncontrollable, except by isolation, even at the end of the past century, as they had been since man first appeared on the earth. We have seen the discovery and use of insulin for diabetes; vaccines for typhoid, cholera, pneumonia, common colds; radium for cancer; numerous anti-toxins; the x-ray; the means for reducing the mortality of infants from intestinal diseases that so stealthily attacked them during their first two years, and very recently the miraculous performances of sulphur. The death rate from many

needless scourges has been greatly decreased. But the death rate from cancer, diabetes and diseases of the heart has increased.

Measured in technology and in material things there can be no question about progress in this country since the days of Horace Mann. But even the most optimistic statements of our achievements during this time may not be clear gains. Much of what may seem to be progress may not be progress at all. Life is doubtless more comfortable and more interesting for most of the people and in some ways perhaps safer than it was in 1842. And there has been an elevation of standards of living among the masses of the people. But crime, corruption and bigotry still flourish, notwithstanding the numerous forces that have been raised against these social insanities.

Between the assertion of Mann a century ago and that of the United States Bureau of Education a quarter of a century ago on the pecuniary value of education, many promises were made in the name of education. Although during recent years the people of this country have discovered that many of those promises have been embar-

rassingly unfulfilled, they apparently still retain some of their almost blind and pathetic faith in the wonder-working power of their schools. But since totalitarianism began to threaten civilization and to retard what appeared to be the progress that had been made in the arts of civilized life, and especially since the fall of France in the summer of 1940 and the perfidy of the Japanese war lords last December, the American people have become more concerned than ever about their social and political institutions, about their "democratic way of life" and about their freedoms. During the past few years more questions have been raised about the evidences of real progress than have been raised since the idea of progress got set on its way a little more than two centuries ago.

Such questions may be healthy, but that they have been asked most often and widely since the world got itself out of kilter and went mad may not be spiritually bracing. Those who ask such questions have seemed to see idealism decrease and the world become stronger and stronger for war. They have seen the cost of war as the destroyer of human values increase along

with increased expenditures for education or schooling; they have seen the physical sciences become obligated for much of their progress to the production of weapons of war and destruction; they have seen science cultivated in large part for the prostitution and destruction of science. Moreover, evidence has increased that the people of this country have taken democracy and their "democratic way of life" for granted; that they have taken their schools for granted; that they have taken for granted their freedom of the press, their freedom of speech, their freedom of conscience, their freedom of assembly—freedoms which have been won through many bloody centuries and whose roots run far back into the distant past. Concern about such evidence may be tonic—if it does not appear too late—but also disturbing that it should be necessary.

III

THE NEED FOR PERSPECTIVE

This strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry and divided aims.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888).

It has been said many times, especially during the past three or four decades, that education in the United States is the most important as well as the most incomparable social enterprise carried on in this country. For many decades education has been looked upon by most of the people of this country as one of the most important means for promoting progress. The value of its physical property and the annual expenditures upon the various types of schools run to figures that rank second only to those of the national debt, as President Hutchins of the University of Chicago has reminded us. About one-fourth of the population of the United States are enrolled in these schools which are administered and taught by more than a million men and women. The

growth of our educational arrangements from very humble beginnings in the seventeenth century, when the transition of culture and civilization to the New World was first made, to the present impressive proportions of the most important public social undertaking ever engaged in by any people at any time, testifies to the belief of the people of the United States in the value of education.

The story of the growth of this most fascinating part of our entire democratic epic is largely the story of the economic, social, and political development of the American people. After many struggles, they finally reached the settled conviction that education for all classes and conditions of children and youth was not only a proper function of the state but one of its most important responsibilities, if not indeed the primary duty of governing authorities. Under this conviction education came to be viewed as the state's chief guarantee to self-preservation. Moreover, now for at least a century the argument has proceeded that adequate provision for education, supported and controlled by the people themselves, would contribute to their moral

and spiritual uplift and to their heightened civic virtues, as well as to their increased economic well-being. Education in the United States bears testimony to the belief of the people of this country in social progress. But its way has been a toilsome way, and this fact has to be known before the place and significance of education in the "American way of life," and especially in times like these, can be fully understood.

The democratic principles of American education gained wide application in actual practice only after the bases of education had changed from the theological and ecclesiastical to the secular and civic; only after the old scholastic method of speculation had given way to the scientific method of verification; only after a new social basis for educational and cultural interests had appeared in democracy, which furnished one of the firmest foundations for the defense of universal education; only after a new historical basis had appeared in the theory of development and in the idea of progress; and only after a new economic basis for universal education appeared in the industrial revolution. Obstacles in the way of the American theory of education

finally weakened and were removed by the forces of democracy, evolutionary progress, the industrial revolution, discoveries and advancements in the natural sciences, the growing spirit of religious tolerance, and by the increased sense of responsibility by governing authorities for the public welfare.

Education in the United States may be said to have achieved its loftiest quantitative triumphs about the end or near the end of the third decade of the present century. It was then in its golden glow; the universal elementary school¹ had made a conquest of this country and during those prosperous and promising days became more widely applied than ever before. Before the economic collapse in 1929, the American people were almost lyric in praise of their common schools. The expansion of secondary education had become one of the most prominent social phenomena in this or in any other country in the world and higher education had extended beyond anything ever dreamed of anywhere. Young men and women, led to believe that at-

¹ William C. Bagley, *A Century of the Universal School* (Macmillan, 1937).

tendance at college would give them social prestige and make them wealthy, increased the population of the campuses of the American colleges from about 300,000 to about a million during the decade of the 1920's alone. Other extensions of educational effort, including graduate, professional, and adult education, had come to be widely made. It was the golden or gilded age in American education. Then, in 1929, the great depression set in, disquieting the spirit as well as dislocating the economy of the American people. And the faith of the American people in much of their educational handiwork seemed to be shaken when they saw unfulfilled some of the fair promises that had been made for American education for at least a hundred years.

The promises made for public education during the past century were numerous. It was claimed that education would reduce and even prevent crime; that it would reduce and even prevent poverty and pauperism and make everybody self-supporting, if not indeed rich; that it would greatly increase not only the economic strength of the individual who enjoyed its opportunities but the economic productivity of the

community that encouraged and promoted education; that it would remove and prevent those class distinctions that were obstructive and dangerous to democratic ideals and institutions; that it would guarantee the permanence of the democratic institutions of the United States. These arguments for education were energetically advanced during the second quarter of the nineteenth century and have been brought forward often since that time. But that some if not many of the promises implied in those arguments failed few if any observers of the American scene and of the American educational scene today would attempt to deny. All such observers would have to report that while education in this country has been offered and prescribed as the unfailing cure of all our economic, political, moral, and civic ills, it has not yet fully provided the sovereign hygiene for our individual lives and for our social living. And with all our immense educational creations and especially our so-called "science" of education and its miraculous procedures, the lethargy of the souls of the people of the United States remains uncured.

Since 1929, we have heard and read a great

deal about the degeneration of mankind and the decay of civilization. The numerous and vocal prophets of disaster have whetted our appetite for calamity and given us a sort of sour delight in the contemplation of complete destruction. Civilization, we have been told many times, especially during the past decade, was in a bad way and so-called civilized men had lost perspective and were moving straightaway toward catastrophe.

The social coroners proclaimed the causes of our troubles and threatening disaster. Among these causes were biological degeneration, the failure of democracy and of education, political incompetence and corruption, personal greed and national aggrandizement, and the general fondness of mankind for humbuggery and fraud. It was implied that the physical stamina of the race was slowly withering away and that the mental life of man was breaking down under the stress of the machine age. A distinguished physician pointed out that every other bed in the hospitals of the United States was occupied by a person of sick mind. A late and colorful mayor of New York City revealed a few years ago, as he was

leaving for an enforced vacation on the French Riviera, that popular government was threatened by the forces of hypocrisy. The younger people tended to say that the spirit of free inquiry and conduct was being stifled by the older people and the older people complained that the foundations of morality were being sapped by the younger people. When, on a certain day after 1929, the price of wheat reached a new low level, the explanations of the tumble in the pit included the loss of religious faith, the decadence of democracy, the strain of the machine age, the subversive activities of the Communists, and the disappearance of the American home.

Observers and critics also said that the American people had lost their political, economic, and moral leadership in the Western World. Even the beautiful American dream of a richer and better life for everyone turned out to be a frightful nightmare. A distinguished American historian charged that we had almost completely abandoned the idealism of other years and had substituted material prosperity as our sole national pattern, and he could well have charged

that we had continued to make such a substitution. He said that big, quick, and easy money had become our one standard of value; that our national leaders talked chiefly of economic prosperity; that we had lost our character, and that our courage, which was formerly such a conspicuous quality among us, had given way to a craven fear and pessimism altogether unfathomable. Worse, he said, than economic depression was "the depression of character and standards of national life," due to our dependence for happiness upon material things and "caring for nothing else in the world if we can be temporarily prosperous." And the historian could have added that when things went well we boasted and blustered and when things went wrong we whined—a sign neither of real progress nor of proper perspective.

The jeremiads did not omit education, now for at least a full century the hope and for a considerable part of that time the pride of the American people. In other periods of economic confusion education had been pointed to as the foundation of our personal and public well-being and well-doing and as the certain means of re-

cuperation and in military crises as the first line of defense. But not long after that fateful day in October of 1929, if the records can be believed, the educational arrangements of this country were more severely criticized than at any time since the idea of education began its steady conquest of this country.

Much that the teachers and managers of our schools were being paid by the public to do was violently assailed. The elementary school was denounced as aimless and based upon false beliefs. Its curriculum was described as outworn and its teachers as lacking in standards of excellence and guilty of the unpardonable sin of teaching unrealities. The secondary school was called an expensive and inert fetish. Higher education was pronounced positively degenerate. These charges were made by the alleged friends of education and in many cases by high pedagogical authorities whose opinions were expected to command respect. Moreover, intelligent and influential people not only questioned but actually denied the validity of some of those principles of education in the United States which, after long years of struggle, had come to be accepted

and to pass into practice in the public educational policy of every American commonwealth.

Many so-called social philosophers assumed to assess responsibility for the distressing condition of the United States, if one may judge by their opinions and verdicts. "Our education is one of the sad failures of our history," said one eminent American. Another inveighed that the wave of criminality which we witnessed would be impossible if the schools had done their civic duty. Another said that our education had failed to provide leadership in a democratic society. Another declared that education was crippled because its purposes were not clear and that the American people "were supine before the organized forces of corruption and personal advantage." Robbery, murder, and political dishonesty were charged to the failure of the schools. Another eminent American stated that American idealism was increasingly disparaged and forsaken by the schools, that we had turned our backs on altruism, once so fondly cherished, and had become crass materialists. Each year, said another critic, the people were called upon for more money to teach citizenship in the schools

and each year recorded an increasing percentage of the school product that did not even go to the voting places. Education had not developed a sense of duty among the people, said another. The need, he said, was for more moral and ethical instruction. The president of a great university said that we must concede that education had signally failed. The crisis through which we were passing in the great depression, he was convinced, was the result of our own folly and incompetence and our lack of proper perspective. By these verdicts or views it seemed clear that if the bottom had not dropped out of our educational order it was certainly becoming a bit leaky.

Among the reported obstacles that were said to prevent the schools from performing well their many duties were vested interests, the methods of teacher-education, the increasing demands of the parents and the public, the shift to the schools of responsibilities once apparently well met by other institutions, including especially the home and the church; and the general tendency of parents, public, and teachers to take the work of the schools for granted. It was pointed out that parents seemed to be more con-

cerned for their children to get on and up in the world than they were for their political and civic health and the general welfare, which the founders of this nation and other leaders after them had urged as reasons for education in this country. Too, as often charged, there were those who believed that the schools were often controlled by political spoilsmen and that the motto of teachers must therefore be "safety first." It was even said that many teachers like many other public servants were "in it for what they can get out of it." As for general public indifference, which naturally carried over to the schools, Franklin P. Adams, in "The Conning Tower" of the *New York World*, a few years ago gave it as his view that "some newspaper should offer a prize of a machine gun for the best answer to what will make the American public indignant for three consecutive days." This suggestion was made, however, before the brutal and bloody days of Hitler and the treacherous attack on Pearl Harbor on that quiet Sunday morning last December.

The slashing of educational budgets by state legislatures during the depression was one sign

of dissatisfaction with our educational arrangements. True, there was extraordinary strangeness about the reduction of school support to meet difficulties arising out of that dislocation. In other dark times, if the records can be believed, educational opportunity was enlarged rather than restricted. Moreover, the pedagogical experts threw in with other critics of the schools. The high priests in education—those who set the pedagogical styles for the managers and teachers of the schools—severely censured their own handiwork. Even compulsory education was denounced as a foolish arrangement and likened to a drunken man scattering coins in a crowd. The schools were charged with the spread of crime, increase in the divorce rate, and the prevalence of political corruption. Other masters of the arts of pedagogy criticized their own disciples, saying that educational administrators were opportunists who moved along with currents and trends and that teachers were “little more than automatons.” A distinguished educationalist said that some thirty to fifty per cent of the materials taught in the American schools should be eliminated, but he failed to

say how he arrived at that figure and he neglected to prescribe proper substitution for the materials he would eliminate. These omissions of the master left hundreds of his audience as dismayed at the end as they were at the beginning of his lecture, during which he had one of his feet on pedagogical Mount Sinai and the other on pedagogical Mount Olympus.

Meantime, the press ridiculed those who went about the Middletowns teaching and managing schools. Probably in no period of our history have our schools been so severely criticized by the Fourth Estate. The charge was made that the schools were undertaking to cover the earth, trying to do too many things, and that they acquiesced in, when they did not instigate, all sorts of movements to make the schools assume the functions of home, Church, and State and that almost "every sort of quack, pretentious mountebank, and pious fraud can invade the field of education." The difficulty of throwing such charlatans out was obvious, it was noted, because the average layman was such "an easy victim for educational 'experts' with fifty-seven varieties of expensive idiocy."

Commencement orators joined in the criticism. If graduates of the schools during the depression actually heard the dismal words spoken at their commencements, they must have been aware that they were taking their diplomas into a cold and forbidding world. They were told that the deadliest afflictions of the American people were astrology in business, buncombe in politics, superstition in daily life, exaggerated and perverted emotions, public ignorance on political and social questions; that the world was crippled by spiritual paralysis, moral inertia, a shabby philosophy of life and by graft that seemed widely accepted; that the social order rested upon a moral rather than an economic and material foundation, and unless the gain-seeking motives of Americans were subordinated to the ideal of unselfish human service, grief and disaster would continue to becloud and distress the world.

Lucretius noted in *De Rerum Natura* that a common shipwreck is generally a consolation to all. Even the pulpit joined with the professional pedagogues, the press, and commencement baccalaureateers and pulpитеers and charged

to education the broken fortunes, the defalcations, and the suicides that accompanied the depression. The young people who were leaving the sheltered places of the higher learning heard that the people of this country had lost their sacred heritages because they did not fight for them; that the need was for a revolt against hypocrisies and harrowing impositions; that the disgrace of the period appeared in the fact that millions of people lacked the necessities of life in times of great abundance—a strange contradiction which seemed stranger still when revealed only after the world had fallen on evil days. The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, in an encyclical adopted in 1932, blamed greed for the crisis and declared that economic exploitation, through which the acquisitive instinct had submerged the sense of social responsibility, was “bearing and eating its own bitter fruit.”

The Council recalled that the extent of unemployment in 1932 did not contrast sharply with conditions during the preceding years of prosperity, just before the collapse of 1929, when ten or twelve million people were living in the

United States "at the level of bare subsistence." It felt a sense of sorrow akin to that of shame when it looked out upon the tragically un-Christian character of so much of American life. The American people had substituted one form of paganism for another. Suspicion, fear, malice, lust, and greed were as mightily malignant in the presence of unparalleled scientific achievements and material prosperity as these passions were among primitive peoples. Attempts to create a just society upon the supremacy of material things had brought confusion, disappointment, and disillusion. The American people had paid a heavy price, we were told in the bad weather days, to learn that the making of money did not automatically make a great human being. The great American vice was not graft, nor corruption nor vice itself, but indifference to these afflictions and toward suffering, injustice, cruelties, hardships, racial discriminations and conflicts; the world had broken from sound traditions and had failed to find sustaining substitutes with which to live. Men and women found the world empty and sought cover for their sad plight in cynicism and clever mockery and sneers;

material and scientific achievements, as miraculous and as magnificent as these had been, were insufficient; humanity had scanned every solution offered for the ills of modern society but selfishness and cruelty had caused men to turn away disappointed.

Warden Lewis E. Lawes of Ossining told the National Education Association that American education had done little or nothing to mold character and that there was a missing link between American education and American character. The aspirations of education as proclaimed in official documents were noble, he said, but the records of police departments, children's courts and children's homes and reformatories told a different story.

Meantime, appeared the fashion of using scientific arguments to impress upon the mind of man his real or his alleged insignificance, his unimportance in the universe, as well as the fashion of another school of thought that held man's real greatness to lie in his independence of the universe—the theory that he can afford to disregard social problems if he gets a maximum of thrill and pleasure out of life. It was

charged that the scientists romanticized the self-sufficiency of man and asserted that his salvation depended upon the extent of his scientific knowledge. To these charges of materialism and greed made by the clerics and other idealists the advocates of science declared that if there was a taint of materialism in this powerful age it should not be charged to the sciences and their achievements for the use of mankind. It should be charged against "the spiritual unpreparedness of mankind to enjoy these gifts that have been bought through power."

The publication of *The Origin of Species*, referred to above, helped to produce what has been called the critical period in organized religion in the United States, that bitter conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between fundamentalism and modernism, between science and theology, when the validity of the Bible seemed to be at stake, largely through the findings of science and scholarship. Most scientists regard this book, which appeared in 1859, as having a greater influence on the development of ideas than any book published in the nineteenth century, although *Das Kapital* has been listed by

John Dewey, Charles A. Beard, and Edward Weeks, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, at the top of the twenty-five most influential books (on both thought and action) published since 1885.²

In the work of Darwin, Marx, and Wagner a recent writer, Jacques Barzun, sees the "crystallization of our own century's beliefs."³ These three men—an English naturalist, a German socialist and philosopher, and a German dramatic composer, poet and essayist—"presented the idea of mechanical materialism which prevails in our thinking today." The jacket of Barzun's book bore the sub-title "The Fatal Legacy of 'Progress.'" The Darwinian, Marxian, and Wagnerian world which developed out of the idea of "mechanical materialism" and came to prevail in the thinking of men was "alien, cold, and uncomfortable." And, it was also a chaotic world. Had not individual and human personality been left out of the plan of things? asked Barzun. The feelings of

² Edward Weeks, *This Trade of Writing* (Little, Brown, 1936), pp. 278-281. The first part of *Das Kapital* appeared in 1867, the second in 1885, and the third in 1894. Marx's *Critique of Political Economy* and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* had appeared in the same year with Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

³ *Darwin, Marx, Wagner* (Little, Brown, 1941).

men and women had become illusory and their wills had become impotent. Apparently, everything that had seemed to count in this world had been reduced to material fact and given to human beings the kind of world in which Hitlers and Japanese war lords love to live and to rule. Was not the world still in a warm and romantic mood and the individual looked upon as precious before the advent of Darwin and Marx and Wagner, after whom the world began to turn harsh and forbidding and cold? Did not natural selection, the bitter class struggle, and the "Wagnerian warriors" sow the wind out of which has come the whirlwind? If the fathers eat sour grapes will not their children's teeth be set on edge?

Viewed historically, the word Darwinism came to be closely associated with progress. All things and events had physical origin, all physical origins could be discovered by science, and only the scientific method could reveal the nature of things and events. And this revelation tended to make fatalism and progress almost one and the same thing. The Darwinian hypotheses of evolution, natural selection, and the

survival of the fittest helped to create a new center of intellectual gravity. A heavy blow was thus dealt transcendentalism, which was subjective rather than objective and asserted the domination of the spiritual over the material or experimental world. The "self-evident truths" cherished by transcendentalism were not subject to laboratory proof. Laws, especially moral laws, were absolute and changeless. A social conscience did not derive from changing social needs, or the mood of the moment.

The theologians attacked Darwinism as materialistic and atheistic, as a beastly hypothesis of man's origin. And the critics of the critics of Darwinism and the doctrine of natural selection replied that the biblical account of creation was a mud theory. So monkey or mud became a heated question. When the Johns Hopkins University was opened in 1876 the devout were horrified, for the atmosphere of the ceremony was more secular than religious. Thomas Huxley gave the address inaugurating this first of all American universities to place emphasis upon graduate work and research. The fundamentalists said that it was bad to have Huxley there. It would

have been better to have had God there. But it would have been absurd to have had both God and Huxley there.

From the 1870's through the 1890's a flood of heated argument filled the press and pulpit over the controversy or warfare between science and theology. So exciting did the question become that Mark Twain proposed that a monument be erected to Adam before the great progenitor of the race should be entirely supplanted by Darwin's monkey. Conflicts began to gather over this same issue no longer ago than the 1920's. Between 1921 and 1929, thirty-seven bills against the teaching of the theory of evolution were introduced in nearly half of the American state legislatures—in thirteen states in 1926 alone. In some states, the battles were bitter if not bloody, but no part of the country had a monopoly on the "Fundamentalist War." Loud rumblings of the conflict were heard in "the corridors of the American public schools." The teaching of the theory of evolution was "forbidden in approximately two thirds of the rural districts of the Union" and a federal anti-evolution amendment "was one of the avowed goals"

of two prominent fundamentalist organizations. The nation-wide campaign reported to have been proposed seems to have been thwarted, after October, 1929, when the great depression set in. Then both fundamentalists and modernists had to attend to more pressing matters and let up on the question whether they came from mud or monkey. In most states the fights for anti-evolution bills failed, but many teachers were dismissed from their posts for holding certain scientific views.

The origin and gradual growth of the dynamic idea of progress during the past two centuries are very significant for education, and especially for education in American democracy today and in the years ahead. It is not so much its growth during the past two centuries as its meaning to-day and for the future, however, that gives importance to the idea of progress. We in this country may miss the point and especially the point of educational progress if we merely view the expansion of the *externa* of education in the United States, or look upon educational changes as undisputable evidences of educational and social progress. To get the fundamental point we

must view educational advancement as something more than increase in educational budgets, buildings, laboratories, even libraries, as indispensable as these are, or the length of school terms, the number of children and young people in school and college, the number of certificates and degrees awarded, and the increase in salaries of the teachers and managers of our schools from decade to decade. These things are important and are doubtless evidences of increased and increasing interest of the people of the United States in their educational arrangements. But neither these things alone nor frequent and fantastic changes in pedagogical theories are necessarily signs of educational advancement.

The history of the idea of progress warns educational theorists and practitioners, alike, to-day against the growing tendency in this country to look upon and interpret every so-called "trend" as a significant movement forward. Moreover, as Chesterton says, no one has a right to use the magical word "progress" without having himself a definite belief. "Nobody," he says, "can be progressive without being doc-

trinal; I might almost say that nobody can be progressive without being infallible—at any rate without believing in some infallibility. For progress by its very name indicates a direction; and the moment we become doubtful about the direction, we become to the same degree doubtful about progress."

A century ago most Americans believed in the explanation of the creation as given in the Book of Genesis, and looked upon feeble-mindedness, insanity, and other abnormalities as practical jokes played upon puny and helpless human beings by a capricious God and upon human physical diseases as vengeful visitations of Providence. Most people believed themselves conceived in the sin and born in the iniquity of the old Adam. Theology, which had been the jealous queen of the sciences for long centuries, made children imps of the devil. But theology in time had to yield at least a part of her supreme place to the rival majesty, experimental science, especially biology and later her daughter, modern psychology. Children then ceased to be the imps of the devil which theology had made them and became mere chemical and mechanistic episodes

which modern psychology has tended to make them.

The Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives, in a treatise on education published more than four hundred years ago, knew that he was living in a world of change, such as we nowadays are told that we are living in, for he said that everything in it changed every day, except human nature. He must have known that not every new thing was likely to be true and that what is true does not have to be new. In an interesting way, he anticipated the statement of Samuel Butler in *Erewhon* that if Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner" had been called "The Old Sailor" it would not have taken so well. He also said, apparently anticipating the effluvia in modern American education, that human beings tended to get their opinions just as they get their milk, on the principle that it is cheaper to buy it than to keep a cow: "So it is, but the milk is more likely to be watered."

Belief in social progress as a fact depends upon the criteria of both human and social values which men use in measuring social progress. It also depends upon the element of time involved

in the period measured. It is obvious that in the mastery of nature and physical forces, in control over material things, there has been tremendous progress in the United States during the past century. This mastery and control are almost everywhere witnessed by the American people. This kind of "progress" helps to bring to mind the predictions of Benjamin Franklin, who wrote that it was "impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried, in a thousand years, the power of man over matter." He said that man may perhaps learn to "deprive large masses of their gravity and give them levity, for the sake of easy transportation." He saw the science of agriculture reducing its labor and increasing its production; he predicted that "all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured, not excepting that of old age, and our lives lengthened at pleasure even beyond the antediluvian." Then he exclaimed: "O that moral science were in a fair way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another and that human beings would at least learn what they now improperly call humanity!"

In the conclusion of his brilliant inquiry into its origin and growth, Bury noted how this most dynamic social idea of progress had to overcome obstacles to achieve its ascendancy and unfold its meaning. In doing so, he pointed to the strength of the "illusion of finality." And he said that if we accept "the reasonings on which the dogma of Progress is based," it may be necessary and legitimate to exempt the dogma itself in order to escape from the illusion of finality. "Will not that process of change, for which Progress is the optimistic name, compel 'Progress' too to fall from the commanding position in which it is now, with apparent security enthroned?" He thought the time would come when a new idea might take the place of the idea of progress "as the directing idea of humanity. Another star, unnoticed now or invisible, will climb up the intellectual heaven, and human emotions will react to its influence, human plans respond to its guidance. It will be the criterion by which Progress and all other ideas will be judged. And it too will have its successor." Bury thought that perhaps the idea of progress itself suggested

“that its value as a doctrine is only relative, corresponding to a certain not very advanced stage of civilization. . . .”

The arguments for the monetary value of education given in 1842 and those presented for such a value in 1917—with the blessings of the United States Bureau of Education—were not altogether unlike, although Mann did gesture a stronger sort of apology in presenting them. But the arguments presented in 1842 and in 1917 were very unlike the arguments offered earlier in our national history. It is apparent that in times as troublous as the present the attention of the American people should be recalled to the ideals of education held by the founders of this Republic, who seemed to view democracy, especially political democracy, as an “irresistible movement” in the life of this country, with education as the foundation of that movement.

That the educational provisions of the early constitutions of the American states were generally vague is familiar to students of the social history of this country. Specific mandates to legislatures to establish schools were lacking;

and the vagueness of the constitutional provisions for education has often been pointed to as one cause of the long delay by some of the state legislatures in providing for public schools. But a new secular motive for education soon appeared and in time was to displace the religious or ecclesiastical motive that had been so strong during the colonial period and continued strong in many parts of the United States far into the nineteenth century.

The early national leaders revealed keen interest in education, which they looked upon as the only foundation for the proper support of the rights and liberties of the American people. In his first message to Congress, Washington had said that knowledge was everywhere “the surest basis of public happiness” and that the “enlightened confidence of the people was indispensable.” His argument in 1789 that the American people must be taught to know and value their rights and “to discern and provide against invasions of them” was prophetic—and it is as applicable today as then. In his Farewell Address, Washington again spoke on the necessity of the enlightenment of public opinion.

Earlier, Thomas Jefferson had declared that the most effectual means of preventing the perversion of power into tyranny was through education, by the illumination "of the minds of the people at large." This great American, whose perspective for education in this country has hardly yet been fully gained, was convinced that public well-being depended upon the proper education of the people, without regard to "wealth, birth, or other accidental conditions or circumstances." John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, declared that knowledge was "the soul of a Republic." Through education, he wrote, the weak and the weak of will and the wicked would be diminished in number. James Madison said that popular government without popular information was the first step toward "a farce or a tragedy, or perhaps both." If the American people intended to be self-governing they must first "arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." John Adams believed that the proper instruction of the people for the proper practice of their duties as "men, citizens, and Christians, and of their political and civil duties as members

of society and freemen" should extend to all the people, "down to the lowest and the poorest." General Francis Marion, the quick and resourceful "Old Swamp Fox" who had brought despair to Colonel Tarleton during the Revolutionary War, told the legislature of his state of South Carolina to beware of "penny wit and pound foolishness." He said then, as can properly be said now, that free men will fight for their country and its form of government "according to their sense of its value. To value it aright they must understand it. This they cannot do without education."

In the views of these advocates of education in the early national period, its chief purpose was to enable the people to realize the ideal and the possibility of progress, to raise the general level of life among them, to employ science to serve human beings, to instruct people in the duties of American citizenship and democratic principles, and to strengthen nationalism in this country. Freedom of thought was one of the chief instruments for the realization of these purposes of education. "A perfect freedom of debate is essential to a free government," wrote

Noah Webster; and Samuel Harrison Smith urged "a vigorous spirit of research." Some of these early advocates of education may have seen economic security for those who had access to schooling, but they did not emphasize such a value as later advocates of education came to do.

The recent history of this country reveals that the American people are more likely to turn in crises, whether economic or military, than in fair weather days, to education as the solution for all their political, economic, social, and civic problems. In fair weather days they seem to take both education and democracy for granted, or merely to do lip service to these foundations of American life. But when adversity comes they are likely first to whine and complain about the unfulfilled promises of education and democracy. Then they are inclined prayerfully to turn to the strongholds of education and democracy "as prisoners of hope." How they began their economic whining during the great depression and went to the mourners' bench of democracy when Hitler went to Warsaw and Paris is now fairly well known. Such behavior by a nation that has

made so much "progress" in education emphasizes facts familiar to all of us—that resolutions cannot be sustained or sustain themselves without an active display of will, and that those made under compulsion generally do not last longer than the period of duress.

Many are the signs that in the midst of our prodigious material growth and scientific achievements our educational perspective has become beclouded. Many centuries ago the distinguished Roman jurist Ulpian warned against the danger of definitions in the law, pointing out that definitions rarely go far enough, are often contradicted by the facts, and also are ancient and somewhat celebrated remedies for uncertainty and confusion. This apparently wise observation on legal definitions is probably equally applicable to definitions in social and educational subjects. But to follow too closely the advice of Ulpian may be dangerous, particularly in education, and more particularly in education in the United States now. Some of the confusion that appears in life and therefore in education in the United States today is due in part at least to our failure or re-

luctance to define more clearly our purposes in life and our educational purposes, both of which seem vague and lacking in perspective.

Confusion in aims is today a very striking characteristic of education in the United States. The numerous aims of education proposed and officially formulated and published have led to the confusion of teachers, administrators, and parents. More than fifteen hundred social aims of the study of English, more than three hundred aims of arithmetic in the first six grades, and more than eight hundred generalized aims of the social studies have been listed here and there in courses of study and in special studies. In one course for the social studies in the seventh grade appeared one hundred thirty-five aims; in another subject more than eighty aims were found; the objectives of a junior-high-school course were so numerous as to require many pages merely for their listing. On file in the "curriculum laboratory" of an institution for the training of teachers are more than fifty thousand "curricula" which have been prepared by committees and in most cases published and distributed during the past two decades. These conditions reflect the

absence of a consistent philosophy concerning the aims of education in the United States.⁴ Even approximate definitions of the aims of education serve useful purposes. Without them, there can be no definite goal, no landmark to guide, no central point around which the improvement of the work of the schools and education may revolve. Without a definite goal, what road shall be taken? How can one know when he has reached the goal? Without intelligent educational aims how can there be intelligent educational direction?

Another sign of confusion and lack of perspective appears in the imitativeness of "modern" education in the United States and is rapidly becoming one of its most insidious dangers. The tendency to imitate in physical plants, especially in the flush days of the 1920's, and in complex administrative machinery is obvious. It reflects competition and fear of competition, and particularly the fear that an institution is not identified with the fitness and fashion of things in education. Though fashion may slay them and

⁴ H. L. Caswell and D. S. Campbell, *Curriculum Development* (American Book Company, 1935), pp. 119-20.

their children yet must the managers and teachers of the schools trust it. Such a tendency in plant and machinery is more easily explained than the mania for the revision of the curriculum to meet "social change and social need" and to keep up with so-called "trends" in the education of teachers. Nowadays the most monohippic summer session must have at least one "workshop" or be frowned upon as old-fashioned and therefore without educational vitality and "umph." Here as in other parts of our educational life where imitative tendencies run riot the "man milliner in education" gets and keeps busier with the passing of each year. Delinquent and dejected is the forward-looking dean or professor of education who does not these days discover at least one pedagogical mare's nest during the summer session or semester.

If change means progress, education in the United States has been making progress by leaps and bounds. The obvious fact of change in the world has in recent years been asserted with such pedagogical pontificality as to give it the glamour of fresh discovery. But that the world of today is different from the world of yester-

day is not sufficient reason for changing the theory of education every day. Change in conditions does not mean that the ideals and principles and values of human life of yesterday have become obsolete. In times of emergency, economic or military, it is not the function of sound education to change its aims. Its task is to do better what it is expected to do anyway, to serve as a stabilizing influence, to emphasize more strongly permanent values in human life. Some of the pedagogical proposals made in recent years to meet changed conditions seem to deny the fact of permanent human needs and values. Conditions surrounding human beings change, of course. But the human need of ability to distinguish between the permanent and the temporary, between gold and gilding, remains unchanged and unchanging.

Lack of perspective appears in the fact that the aimlessness and sentimentality that penetrate other areas of our life find their way into our education. Nowhere else do fashions come and go more quickly than in education; feverish is the effort to keep up with the Joneses in educational arrangements. We show a burn-

ing and restless curiosity to go somewhere without knowing just where we want or need to go. We rush furiously from one pedagogical whim, or enthusiasm, or thrill, or passion to another, and always under the spell of men and women who call themselves "progressive" and have a genius for publicity for their latest pedagogical gadgets and techniques.

Not only are materials and methods of education changed, but even the primary function of the teacher is changed. His responsibility now becomes not the training and direction of minds and the dissemination of knowledge useful to people and to the world in which they live. Rather his function becomes that of the physician, the lawyer, the clergyman, the nurse, the policeman, the fireman, the census taker, the caretaker, the uplifter, the propagandist, the specialist on soil erosion, hookworm, cattle tick, hog cholera, venereal diseases, the tariff, unemployment, international relations. Thus do our progressives tend to fill our schools with smoke rather than light. With the function of the teacher thus changed the apocalypse of the pedagogical evangels discloses a prospect of

prosperity and peace. The flaming fervor of the progressive educationists recalls the suggestion of Emerson: that when the abolitionists emerged from their huddle or the transcendentalists from their romantic playshops, Nature seemed to say to them: "Why so hot and hasty, my little Sirs?"

During the depression we demanded that the school build a new social order. Now we are requiring that our school children solve the economic, social, and political problems which the wisest men of the past have failed to solve and which few if any of the teachers of our children are capable of solving. The tendency is to remove the walls of the school so that the children may look out upon the ills of the world.

Under these theories, children of tender age are plunged into a superficial study of "community resources" and are led to believe that such superficial study is more educative than books and ideas which have stood the test of the ages. Out of this tendency has grown also a somewhat wide-spread contempt for knowledge and its mastery, and for accurate information, which may reflect the cheerful excuse for intellectual indolence. Our pedagogical high priests say that

the important thing in education is not ideas or knowledge but attitudes and the thinking process. But how good attitudes and sound thinking can be developed without good ideas, sound knowledge and accurate information, the pedagogical Brahmans never take the time to explain. Moreover, there is growing criticism and satirical attitude among our pedologists toward everything that is traditional in education. If they have any faith whatever it is the belief that the latest thing in education is the best. Modern pedagogy in the United States appears to represent a retreat from reason and a denial of the experience of the race. It is characterized by accommodation to the mood of the moment. Each of the various modish and smart fashions in pedagogy during recent years has left confusion and uncertainty in its wake.

Educational theory in the United States today represents a definite philosophy of education less than at any time in the past. It represents a somewhat pitiable attempt to get along without a definite educational philosophy or belief. It is a "hand to mouth" concept of education, declining to make decisions except on the spur of the

moment and the alleged instantaneous need for decisions. It is hospitable to every wind of pedagogical doctrine, tends to be formless and planless, to trust to faith or hope or charity or luck for "outcomes" and "end products" and seems allergic to constants in human life. It insists on no orthodoxy except the orthodoxy of no orthodoxy, has no habits except the habit of having no habits, accepts no faith except faith in having no faith.

Under such conditions, we need not expect our incredible achievements and our immense educational arrangements to counteract any unhealthy tendencies in our nation's life, or to remove doubts concerning the integrity and vitality and the perpetuation of our institutions. Current confusing pedagogical theories clearly show our need for perspective, for a deeper appreciation of the real meaning of our human institutions which are nowadays placed in jeopardy. Our need is to build our educational life on the wisdom and reason of the ages rather than upon the temporary and transitory demands of a single period.

We have developed immense material re-

sources and won precious freedoms. With these achievements have come great opportunities and responsibilities. But one of our darling weaknesses is our heavy emphasis upon material things. Some of the essential needs and aspirations of men today are not unlike those that perplexed our forefathers. But what we have inherited from our fathers we must earn for ourselves before we can call it our own, to paraphrase the lively words of Goethe. Our material progress may becloud our perspective, in the midst of

This strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry and divided aims,

as Arnold described it in his "Scholar-Gypsy."

Our concern during recent years with the fortunes of democracy should give us pause. During the first fifty years of what came to be the National Education Association, the word "democracy" appeared only a few times in the titles of addresses before that organization of the most distinguished educational leaders in the United States. Here is evidence enough of the startling fact that the American people have taken for

granted their democracy and their precious freedoms.

Taking liberty for granted is a dangerous indulgence for men who think themselves free. The condition upon which men have gained liberty is eternal vigilance. And "the tree of liberty," as Jefferson tried to teach us many years ago, "must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." Freedom cannot be gained or retained by slogans or mottoes or placards or mere copybook-headings for school children. The truth of the great American many years ago should be kept constantly before us: "God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it."

Since the time of Aristotle the dangers inherent in democracy have been fairly well known and widely discussed. Only that democracy which has both intelligence and character can triumph in this world. In our own democracy, perhaps, we have not placed proper emphasis on the responsibility of the individual for social progress. If not, we need not expect our educational arrangements to promote a patriotism that can extend beyond celebrations on the Fourth of

July. Until proper perspective is gained, until a more intelligent patriotism is inspired, we may well continue our doubts as to the integrity and vitality of our institutions and their perpetuation.

One of our greatest needs is for a deeper appreciation on the part of all of us of the real meaning and a keener sense of responsibility for the preservation of our human institutions. But how can we separate the ethics of the life of the individual from the roots of the ethics of our body politic, economic, and social? Of all human activities in the modern world education should build its life on the wisdom and reason of the ages rather than upon the temporary and transitory demands of a single period. In no other way can education produce the just human society. It is the business of education to instruct and to lead to that life and to that society by guiding and training the individual citizen in the high and alluring adventure of thinking and living aright.

Throughout the past century, and particularly throughout the past half century, the need for perspective has become increasingly apparent. The need is for adjustment of our social habits

and relationships as well as our mental outlook to the dangers of the new powers which we have developed but have not fully mastered. Those implements of power have increased the complexity of life and the tempo of changes in the social environment. Outward conditions of life have changed rapidly. Our spiritual preparedness for the gifts of science has not fully developed. We have failed to adjust our social activities and relationships to the marvelous extension of our scientific knowledge and power. Economic disturbances aggravate human passions and darken their outlook. We have not learned how to govern ourselves, a fact which adds emphasis to the old adage that he who rules his spirit is better than he who takes a city. We have made great progress in the control of physical force, but have we made equal progress in personal and social control? Human relations cannot be improved and a better society cannot be made until the immense resources within our command are employed more intelligently to make better human beings. The material world submits to the uses which men wish to make of it; but men themselves seem indifferent or hos-

tile to proposed modifications in their own behavior, however selfish or anti-social it may be.

During the golden age of education, we began to speak more confidently than before and sometimes even boastfully of “the science of education” and to point proudly to its utopian promises. All that seemed necessary to bring that science to full fruition and usher in the pedagogical millennium was to get some more of the same things in our business of education: larger appropriations, bigger and more palatial school buildings, more motor busses for the transportation of children, more specialists and experts, revised and renovated curricula, more “research,” more principals and assistant principals and assistants to assistant principals; more deans and assistant deans and assistants to assistant deans, and deanettes; larger stadiums for character building, especially during the fall of the year, and more drum majors and drum majorettes.

Intercollegiate football has been called “Dementia Americana.” This affliction of collegiate play and recreation and also collegiate morals is a disease of comparatively recent times. But other parts of our big enterprise of education

in the United States are afflicted by other forms of emotional instability. Among these appears to be a sort of sorcery practiced by the professional pedologists. When big, quick, and easy money became such a high standard of life among the American people, the promise of big, quick, and painless education began to be increasingly made and promoted by high pressure pedagogical salesmen—the New Sophists who are in large part responsible for the imbalance and instability in our educational life. If the standards of modern education are not forthright and firm these have been made so largely by these magicians. And if forthrightness and firmness are to be restored to American education and to American life, the schools must look for real help beyond that now promised by our so-called pedagogical scientists who increasingly employ manifold vehicles to carry vague but heavy pedagogical wordage. Such restoration cannot be provided by curriculum astrologers, workshoppers, or any others who engage in the artistry of pedagogical divination. Also the New Sophists are today encouraging competition in education equally as keen and as irrational, espe-

cially in teacher-education, as that which a century ago theologically and educationally wrested the Great West from Black Hawk and gave it over to John Calvin. The present confusion which the soothsayers have been permitted to bring about in the name of educational research and experimentation calls to mind the pertinent comment in Cicero's *Of the Nature of the Gods*: "It seems an unaccountable thing how one soothsayer can refrain from smiling when he sees another. It is yet a greater wonder that you can refrain from laughing among yourselves."

During the past forty or fifty years, the American people have displayed their faith in schooling by exhibiting great generosity in providing for the physical equipment of their educational facilities. In doing so we have surpassed any people at any time or anywhere and in this respect have made more educational "progress" than any people in human history. But we have not, in the midst of our immense economic resources for education, revealed proper perspective in making provision for its most important part. While we have made tremendous improvements in the quantity of so-called professional

preparation of teachers, we have neglected the qualitative part of their education. To us, the idea of progress in education is quantitative and numerical. In this respect we suffer by comparison with other countries. This imbalance in our education and this lack of perspective may be due in part to our attempt to give schooling to everybody "from the gutter to the university." But this may not be the real reason. The machinery of education, the size and cost of buildings, increased enrollments, the number of vehicles used in transporting children to and from school, highly complex administrative paraphernalia are visible and tangible evidences of what statisticians, political pedagogues, and pedagogical politicians may call educational progress. Some of these evidences naturally bring to American communities considerable satisfaction and pride. But our lack of perspective appears in the fact that we have not exhibited in making provision for effective teaching the same kind of interest that we have displayed in providing the *externa* of education. Moreover, the spirit and faith which apparently formerly served to give to teaching much of its finest quality and to keep it

elevated above that blind materialism which has gained so much strength in American life may have been lost, at least in part. To preserve that quality and that lofty view of education is our most insistent task today. The need is for teachers of stalwart moral constitutions, men and women of conscience as well as of science, of broad and generous culture, high intellectual honesty, contagious enthusiasm for learning and its advancement, passion for "seeing the thing through" and for seeing that those they teach see it through and gain the ability to do the thing they have to do when it should be done whether they like it or not.

Panaceas for conditions which are confusing and frustrating to those who are concerned about integrity and vitality in American education are difficult to offer. But one thing is obvious: If real educational perspective is to be restored and if confusion is to be removed the American people must demand and give more attention to the proper education of better and more effective teachers than our teacher-education institutions are now providing. This means that better and more effective teachers of teachers must be de-

manded and provided. It seems reasonably clear that the professional pedagogues have not come to the kingdom of American education for such a task as this. For to take John Smith and make him as easily as they now do Dr. John Smith, Professor of Education, is not enough. Too much of that kind of metamorphosis has already taken place for the good of American education. Competition among the teacher-education institutions and even the graduate schools to get more students to pay more fees to get more students to pay more fees is not tonic for educational morality. The mania for increasing attendance leads these institutions to lower standards to meet "needs" and to use high superlatives with unconscionable extravagance. Their catalogues are apparently not expected to square with the canons of strict morality, for false promises are often made by Old Siwash in competition with Old Osceola to get more students to pay more fees to get more students to pay more fees to lure John Smith to become Dr. John Smith and Professor of Education. It is doubtful if in any other field of learning standards have deteriorated more or more spurious degrees have been

awarded during the past two or three decades than in the field nowadays euphoniously called “education.” And nowhere else does one presume to be qualified to teach in all parts of such a broad field. Even though nature put him out long before the dean put him in, our professor of education can now nibble widely over all the offerings of a wide catalogue of pedagogical tid-bits. Effective protest against the quackeries of the pedagogical quantitarians must be made before perspective can be gained. We may continue to measure our material progress by the production of pig iron and car loadings. Real educational progress must be measured in brains rather than bricks.

Those who weary of the confusion in educational aims in the United States could well turn nowadays to some living voices from the past. In the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, who wrote no ephemeral books on pedagogy, tampered with no curricula, and organized no curriculum laboratories, no workshops, and no “activities” program, but who is believed by some authorities to have been the noblest personality that ever sat upon the throne of the Caesars, is

heartening advice for American educators today. This Stoic philosopher carried his high ideals and intellectual honesty with him wherever he went, whether in the home, in the street, in the palace, or into the camps of soldiers. His *Meditations* has been called "the most human of all books and one of the imperishable monuments of human thought." He was marked by simplicity, unaffected dignity, fidelity to personal duty, devotion to public welfare, and a clear conscience in the hour of death—imperial qualities of human character and constants in human life which education in our confused United States cannot ignore. In this book we are told that the sole ruler of the Roman Empire for nineteen years and in an age accounted one of the eminent periods in history, learned a good disposition and control of his temper, modesty and manliness, respect for religion, a love of liberality, the habit of checking evil actions and repressing evil thoughts, the simple way of living, the avoidance of luxury, to endure toil, to have few wants, to be industrious, to mind his own business, to despise slander, to refrain from fault finding, to be cheerful in all circumstances, and to be un-

blinded to partisan zeal. Moreover, according to the record, he learned to avoid vain and trifling things and not to believe in the pretensions of magicians and sorcerers and their charms and exorcisms.

Isocrates, the great Athenian teacher of twenty-four centuries ago, gave advice on teaching which is pertinent today. He said that if all those who undertake instruction would speak the truth and not make greater promises than they can fulfill, they would not be accused by the illiterate. He also said that properly educated persons were those who managed well the circumstances and conditions which they encountered day by day, who possessed a "judgment which is accurate in meeting occasions as they arise," who were honorable in their relations with all with whom they associated, who held their pleasures under control, were not unduly overcome by misfortunes, were not spoiled by successes and would not desert their true selves in adversity but as intelligent men hold their ground steadfastly.

"Man thinking," Emerson told us, "must not be subdued by his instruments." In his

“American Scholar,” a Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard more than one hundred years ago, he made a powerful plea for the interpreter in American education. That plea is needed to-day. This great American sage urged that teachers know what men are doing and be acquainted with the everyday life of the world. But he cried out against the teacher who teaches by rule, “who becomes changed into a thing,” a mere mechanism who is seldom cheered by the true dignity of his work but is “ridden by the routine of his craft,” to which his soul is subject. He noted that the teacher himself may not be able to discover all or many of those things which make for the progress of the world. He may not stimulate many others to make such discoveries. But he emphasized then as must be emphasized today that the good teacher has opportunities that no other person has—to lead men and women through his teaching to high and honest living. And he could have said that immortality for the teacher is gained only when he blossoms in the lives and works of others.

The rash tendencies to ascribe omnipotence to schooling and to make our educational philos-

ophy a creature of the immediate moment may be difficult to arrest. But these tendencies must be arrested if proper educational perspective is to be gained. The immediate is only a fragment of the past and of the future. Reaffirmation of belief in constants in education and the human virtues once considered respectable would serve to quiet some of our unsettled spirits and dispel some of our doubts about our educational work and our institutions. Perhaps we need to have our eyes on a longer past and a longer future if we are ever able to "call the future from its cradle and the past out of its grave." We must refuse to be driven backward by the dead words of living men. Rather, we need to become more willing than we now are to be led forward by the living words of the dead.

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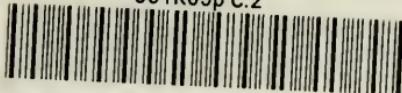
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